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The Cleveland Plot

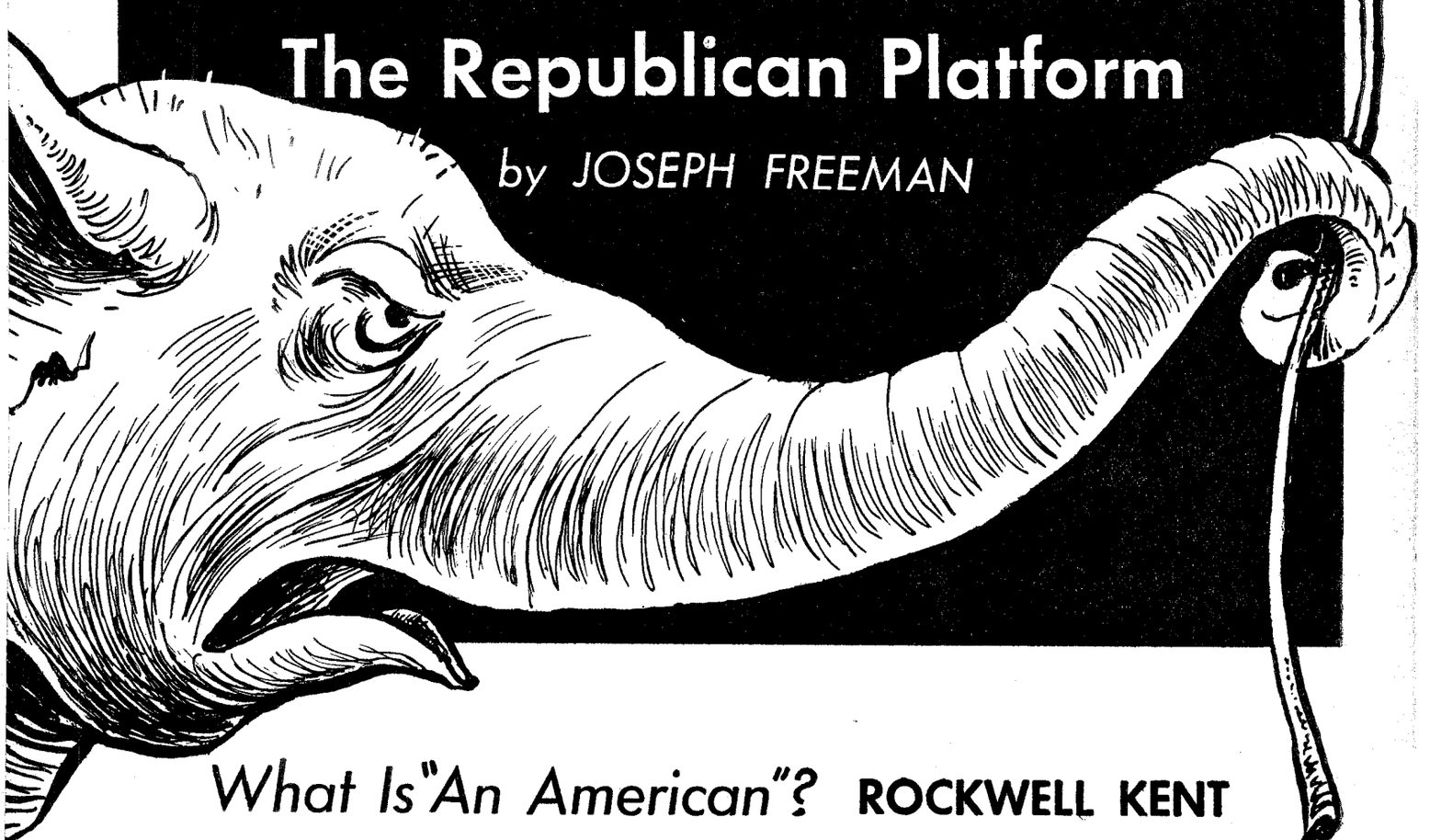
by MARGUERITE YOUNG

Hearst's Happy Landon

by BRUCE MINTON

The Republican Platform

by JOSEPH FREEMAN



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New Masses

JUNE 23, 1936

Who Backs Him?

A YEAR and a half ago THE NEW MASSES published information of Edmondson's Jew-baiting activities. John L. Spivak in his remarkable series "Plotting America's Pogroms" revealed Edmondson's role in the network of anti-semitic organizations.

With an election campaign under way, Mayor LaGuardia has finally decided to indict Robert Edward Edmondson, publisher of pornographic, libellous, anti-semitic literature. It is to be hoped that LaGuardia is making more than a publicity gesture and that Edmondson will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

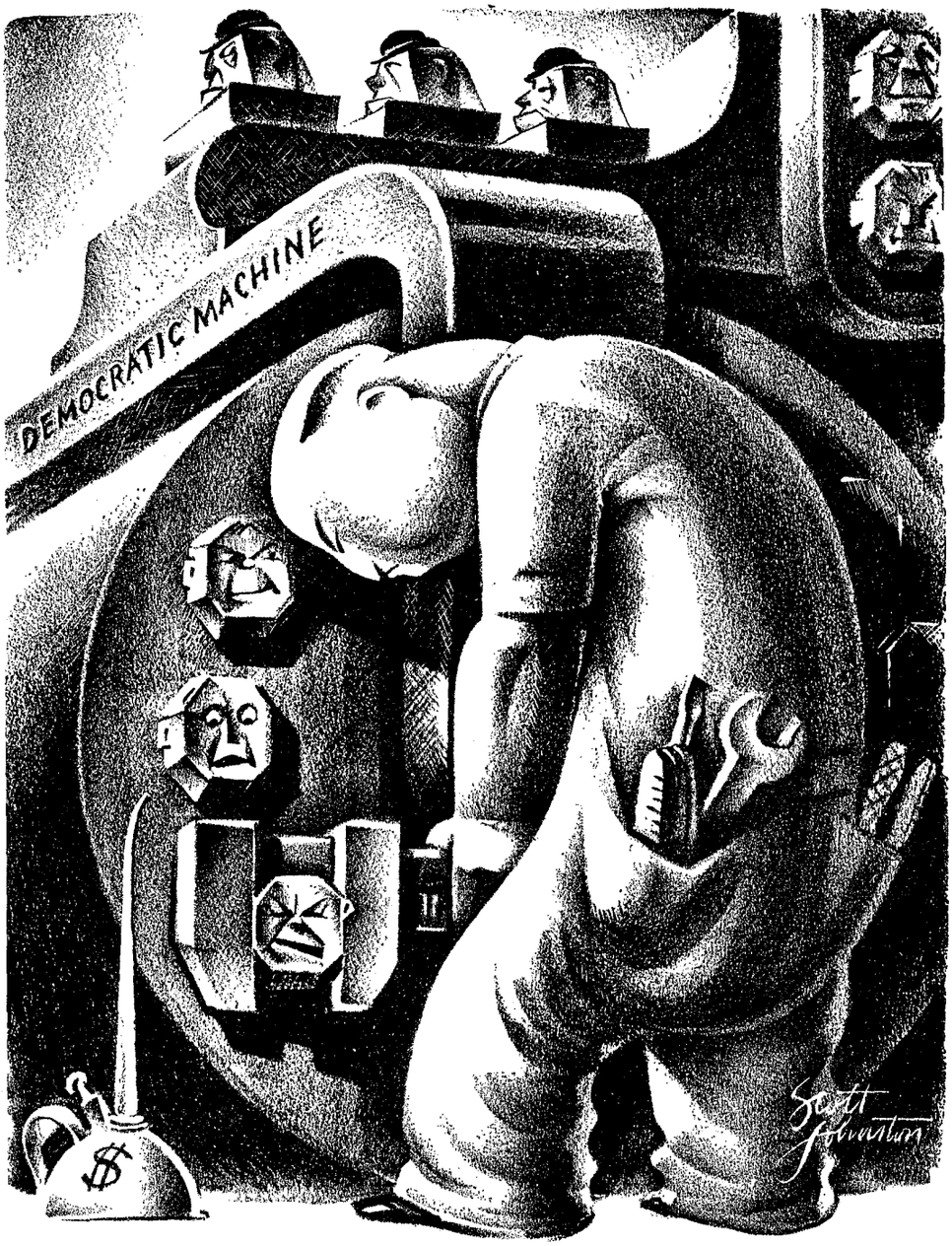
The prosecution cannot realistically end with an investigation of Edmondson. His continual barrage of anti-semitic propaganda implies financial backing. The prosecution will have to inquire: "Who backs Edmondson?" and "What men and organizations benefit from this scurrilous anti-semitic campaign?" If it is to prove more than an election campaign maneuver, the Edmondson investigation must lead to the prosecution of his backers, to the exposure of other organizations, working independently or with him, who are laying an ideological basis for pogroms.

Save Herndon!

GOING the U. S. Supreme Court one better in its heroic defense of the Constitution, the Supreme Court of Georgia has overruled Judge Dorsey's decision in the Herndon case. It is the opinion of the Court that "The Constitution does not guarantee freedom of speech or the right of assembly in the perpetration of a crime." Angelo Herndon's crime was "inciting to insurrection," i. e., organizing workers. Originally passed to suppress slave revolts, the Georgia Insurrection Law was on the point of being invoked again last week against thirteen workers in Atlanta but Recorder A. W. Calloway, more liberal than his Supreme Court, simply imposed fines of $100 or 30 days in jail for "encouraging white and Negro people to meet together." Herndon faces the virtual death sentence of 18 to 20 years on the chain gang. He's facing it with the high courage we have learned to expect of him, with the consciousness of being the symbol of his people's fight for ultimate liberation and with the consciousness that millions of white and black Americans are backing him in his fight.

When, at its last convention, the American Federation of Labor condemned the Insurrection Law, a nation-wide basis was laid for the campaign to save Herndon. Already more than a million signatures demanding his release have been collected protesting the frame-up. With the International Labor Defense's present appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court, both legal and organizational aspects of the battle are entering crucial stages. Georgia was the first state to establish concentration camps for strikers.

That is the kind of "return to pioneering" Talmadge advocates. Angelo Herndon's pioneering is of a different brand and his right to pursue it must be defended at all costs by all workers and progressives. Angelo Herndon must never see the inside of Fulton Tower again.



FARLEY TUNES UP THE MACHINE — *Scott Johnston*

The Case of El Paso

THE Supreme Court found the Guffey Bill unconstitutional and the large corporations were not slow in benefitting by the decision. In Texas, the El Paso Electric Company, part of the Stone and Webster utility chain, has obtained an injunction against the

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National Labor Relations Board in Washington which restrains the Board from proceeding with hearings on charges against the company of unfair labor practices.

When its employes organized in 1934, the El Paso Company hurriedly set up a company union and refused to negotiate with its employes who had joined the A.F. of L. Intimidation followed; the power company lost no time in fortifying its plant and making arrangements to house and feed scabs. The union had no other course but to strike. The El Paso region was without light and power for a day. The company—fearful of public opinion—offered the strikers a truce while the case was submitted to the Labor Board for settlement. The workers accepted.

The company immediately persecuted the returned union men in direct violation of the truce. When the Board hearing was abruptly and mysteriously quashed, the workers struck for a second time. The company, better prepared, brought in scabs and saw to it that the police repeatedly attacked and arrested the pickets. Again the Labor Board considered the case. Now the court has stepped in on the side of the employers. The union remains on strike. The company's next logical move should be to get the Supreme Court to declare strikes unconstitutional.

F.D.R's Evasion

THE tenor of President Roosevelt's reelection campaign is forecast by the speeches he has made while touring the South. The President refuses to counter the Hearst-Liberty-League-Landon reaction with a definite program but seeks refuge in empty "historical" talks, designed to appeal to progressive groups but which on analysis are devoid of any definite commitment.

While the Republicans openly rejoice in the Supreme Court's reactionary decisions, Roosevelt talks of Jefferson who in buying the Louisiana Territory from France "had the courage to act . . . without full and unanimous approval of every member of the legal profession." This remote reference to the Supreme Court may look good on the record, but does it promise real opposition to the Court's dictatorial power?

Similarly, Roosevelt reassures us on the question of war. "We as a nation desire no further expansion," he said at San Jacinto. Cashing in on the American people's opposition to war, Roosevelt refers to territorial expansion which American imperialism does not need at the present time. Does not foreign commercial and investment expansion lead to war as quickly as the desire for land? A small group of American imperialists own Cuba, Central America and sections of South America body and soul. As soon as Japan sent warships to South China, American gunboats arrived to protect American "interests." Why is President Roosevelt so anxious to cover up the drive of American imperialism for expansion with pleasant rhetoric?

Who Pays?

REACTIONARY legislators are standing pat against any solution to the tax wrangle which might affect adversely the mounting profits of the corporations. Discussion now centers on the bills passed by the House and Senate which differ as to the form of taxation on corporate surpluses. In the bill passed by the House emphasis is placed on taxing dividends not distributed to stockholders at a graduated rate up to 42½ percent. This proposal is in line with the recommendation made in March by President Roosevelt. In the Senate bill which is favored by the most important financial groups, this type of levy is set aside almost completely. Furthermore, a step-up is included in the rates on individual incomes in the lower brackets.

It is generally conceded that the President could force the adoption of his original plan, as incorporated in the House bill. But it is not likely that he will have the political temerity to defy Big Business which, in the Republican campaign platform, branded as "punitive" his timid gestures at progressive taxation. The fact that leading New Dealers, including Jesse Jones and Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, espouse the reactionary Senate bill makes resistance on the part of Roosevelt even more doubtful.

A compromise measure, leaning heavily toward the Senate bill while retaining perhaps a levy on undistributed income at a rate so low as to make it innocuous, seems to be the probable outcome of the present snarl. Such a compromise would exemplify the course of retreat which the bold knight of the New Deal has taken in his crusade against the "money changers."

Money Is Money Is Money

GERTRUDE STEIN has been overcome by a sense of impending doom. At first she could not make up her mind precisely what to do with it but as the day wore on this sensation grew and grew and she decided to write it up. Then she sent the article to the editors of The Saturday Evening Post who had always thought her stuff too highbrow but they printed this piece because off and on they too had been afflicted with a sense of impending doom and they thought the readers ought to know. Gertrude Stein thinks the American government has been spending too much money on relief and such. The reason it did this was because it didn't have to work for it long nights the way she did with a pile of bonds and a pair of scissors. Now the coupons are not worth so much because taxes on them are too high. If the government made its mind up that money was money this would not happen. Not only the government:

> I do wish everybody would make up his mind about money being money. . . . So, now please, everybody, everybody, everybody, please, is money money, and if it is, it ought to be the same whether it is what a father of a family earns and spends or a government, if it isn't sooner or later there is disaster.

You see, "in Russia they tried to decide that money was not money, but now slowly and surely they are coming back to know that money is money." That is why over there they do not experience a sense of impending doom while over here only Alfred M. Landon and a few scattered contributors to The Saturday Evening Post realize that money is money and where the money comes from first, if you please.

Tory Canard

THE British tories are worried. The situation in France, according to The New York Times, "from the British viewpoint, is a little short of revolution. . . . Fascism and dictatorship seem to be ever nearer."

For ten years following the Bolshevik Revolution the capitalist press in England and throughout the world announced at regular intervals that the Soviet government had "fallen," or was so weak that its demise was a matter of moments. This same trick is now used against the French People's Front: label it weak, threaten it with the "victory

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of fascism." By so doing, the tories hope to isolate the Blum government, give aid and comfort to the Right, in which the real fascists have a strong leadership. The British ruling class seeks a pretext for wooing public opinion away from France and to facilitating a rapproachment with Nazi Germany against both the Soviet Union and the progressive French government.

In reality, the People's Front has already proven itself a strong barrier to fascism. The Right, by no means eliminated, remains a menace to be fought with increasing vigilance. But the strike of over a million French workers won for them economic and political gains and strengthened their position in the fight against fascism. The Blum government, true to its election promises, supported the strike and within the first week in office passed legislation providing for collective bargaining, the forty-hour week, restoration of pay cuts for government employes and annual vacations. Half a million hitherto unorganized workers have joined the trade unions since the strike began. The workers, orderly and resolute, forced employers to meet demands for higher wages and better working conditions. The labor front was strengthened. The middle classes, in complete sympathy with the strikers, have been drawn even closer to the other elements in the People's Front.

British tories have good reason to worry. But they are actually not concerned over the imminence of fascism in France. They are worried by the unity and power of the French working class and its allies. After all, the example of the People's Front cannot but have a powerful effect on the working class and progressives not only in England but in every capitalist country.

Resisting Japan

ENCOURAGED by the League's failure in Ethiopia, Japan has invaded northern China. So far Chiang Kai-Shek has been passive. He has preferred instead to attack the Red Armies of the Chinese workers and peasants. Now, however, the Canton-Kwantung government has announced plans for fighting Japan's invasion. South China troops are moving northward. This may set off the accumulating forces of Chinese resistance. The cities of North China, too, are stirring with resistance to Japan. There students continue their agitation against China's dismemberment. Canton's role, however it may be motivated, is especially significant. It has insisted upon a joint stand with Chiang Kai-Shek against Japan, and has sharply reprimanded the Nanking generalissimo for his national betrayal. Even if it does not at this moment press the northward advance of troops, Canton's action will have far-reaching effects. If Chiang Kai-Shek continues to sabotage the struggle for national liberation, he is likely to lose all support except that of Chinese reactionaries who consciously serve Japanese imperialism.

Fire Under the Andes

FOR more than a quarter of a century, Juan Vicente Gomez lorded it over Venezuela. The slogan of his tyrannical regime was "peace and work." In the language of the people this became "peace in the graveyards and forced labor on the highways." The death of Gomez about six months ago was the signal for an outpouring of democratic feeling which rocked the old framework of despotism.

But army men, feudal landowners and bourgeois, lost little time in trying to restore the dictatorship which had been so useful to Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell. Their efforts, however, are meeting with pronounced resistance. A projected decree for suppressing Marxist activity, drafted in the best manner of Adolf Hitler and the Japanese military fascists, roused the opposition of the trade unions and student organization. After three general strikes in less than six months, the government was forced to abandon the decree. Last week it attempted to introduce a substitute measure prohibiting political strikes, and heavily fining "subversive" radio broadcasts or publications. A general strike of unprecedented scope was the reply of Venezuela's newly-born labor movement. The capital city was paralyzed, oil pumping was stopped around Lake Maracaibo.

Before resuming work, the strikers compelled President Contreras to promise modification of the latest "public order" decree. They exacted a pledge from the President to accelerate the adoption of a new Constitution.

A coalition of left-wing groups in which the Republican Progressive Party —a revolutionary anti-imperialist organization—is most prominent, has been the directing force in these mass actions. Encouraged by the People's Front victories in France and Spain, this coalition is rapidly assuming the proportions of an all-embracing People's Front movement for democratic rights and for the liberation of Venezuela from the domination of foreign oil monopolists. In the midst of these popular currents a vigorous proletarian movement rapidly grows in influence.

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The New Soviet Constitution

AMENDMENTS to the Soviet Constitution provide for changes in the direction of wider democracy. This is important news. But the extension of Soviet democracy will be completely misunderstood if it is interpreted as a repudiation of previous Soviet practices or a departure from Communist principle.

The Soviet Union has never been undemocratic. Bourgeois democracy, Lenin said, was organized to keep the mass of toilers removed as far as possible from the government apparatus; the Soviet state is organized to bring the mass of toilers as close as possible to the government apparatus.

Stalin subsequently defined the difference by saying that capitalist democracy is the democracy of an exploiting minority based upon the restriction of the rights of the exploited majority and directed against that majority; proletarian democracy is the democracy of the formerly exploited majority based upon the restriction of the rights of the exploiting minority and directed against this minority.

Because Soviet democracy has from the beginning been based upon the interests and rights of the majority of the people, Sidney and Beatrice Webb have emphasized in their classic study made under the old Constitution that there has been more democracy for the mass of the people in the Soviet Union than in any other country in the world.

IF changes are now being made it is because Soviet life itself has changed. But it has not changed accidentally; it has changed according to a preconceived social purpose.

The Soviet state was established in 1917 without a Constitution. It went on without a Constitution for more than a year. The document finally adopted in 1918 was drawn up when the country, ruined economically by the World War, was forced into a costly civil war. Yet even under those conditions, the "republic of workers', soldiers' and peasants' deputies" had a Constitution which guaranteed freedom of speech, press and assembly for those who worked. Those guarantees were rendered effective by placing the press, the printing shops, the meeting halls and the schools in the hands of the workers and the poor peasants.

The country for which Lenin wrote the Constitution of 1918 was in feverish transition from capitalism to socialism. Today, eighteen years after the Constitution was adopted, there is no vestige of a capitalist class. More than ninety-six percent of the means of production belong to the state, the collective farms and the cooperatives. Industry, agriculture and commerce—are on a socialist basis. This has resulted in profound social changes.

IT is to meet the requirements of this new socialist society that the Constitution is being amended chiefly along three lines: indirect elections will be replaced by direct elections; unequal suffrage will be replaced by equal suffrage; and the open ballot will be replaced by the secret ballot.

The tremendous economic progress which socialism alone makes possible has strengthened the bonds between the cities and the villages. The vast Soviet educational program has developed a people largely illiterate to a high level of general and political culture. Direct elections are the logical next step.

Similarly with the extension of the suffrage. The Constitution of 1918 provided certain privileges for the workers as compared with the peasants. This was necessary when all the peasants were small landowners and the kulaks were still powerful in the village. But from the very beginning, the Communist Party emphasized the *temporary* character of these privileges, as one part of a continuous program. The object was to strengthen the leadership of the working class in the Soviet state, to consolidate that state, to guarantee the working farmers the assistance of the proletarian state in improving agriculture and reconstructing the farming regions. These aims have now been achieved. Hence it is now possible and necessary to replace unequal with equal suffrage.

These reasons hold good, also, for the introduction of the secret ballot. There is, however, an additional reason. The Soviet regime considers the secret ballot at this stage of development one more method of thoroughly testing the ties between the organs of the Soviet government and the mass of the people. Moreover, now that economic and social changes have made it possible to introduce the secret ballot, it will serve as an additional instrument in the hands of the people for the purpose of bringing pressure to bear upon the bureaucratic elements.

THE growth of Soviet democracy is all the more striking when we compare it with what is going on in other countries. Nazi Germany and fascist Italy have completely exterminated every democratic right; and in most countries of Europe, Asia and Latin America there is a marked fascist trend. Here, too, big business is determined to crush such democratic usages as may be left. The activities of the Black Legion are ignored by the federal government; the Liberty League and Hearst trample on the Bill of Rights with official assurance, as exemplified by the latest Herndon decision. At the same time the Supreme Court twists and twirls the Constitution to destroy the rights of the exploited majority. Furthermore, in many states Negroes and unemployed workers are actually disfranchised.

For twenty years reactionaries have been howling about Soviet "dictatorship." They have claimed that "human nature cannot change"; and since they conceived human nature in terms of their own greed they argued that no group of men in power would ever relinquish it. But the whole point about the Soviet system is that power has never been the private property of individuals; it has been so far the prerogative of the working-class in alliance with the farmers. And the object of that power has been to create a fuller and freer life for all. In emancipating the individual economically and socially, in expanding his political rights and his cultural attainments, no one gives up anything in the Soviet Union, for no man exploits another. The new Constitution, like everything else in the Soviet Union, is not a surrender but a fulfillment; it is the triumph not only of a new society but of the new individual who, working collectively, is today the freest individual in the world.

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THE ELEPHANT LAYS AN EGG

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The Republican Platform

JOSEPH FREEMAN

ANNE O'HARE McCORMICK, writing in The New York Times, wants us to believe that the Republican Party has been captured by Main Street. The Republicans want us to believe that, too. Actually, the Republican Party is trying to capture Main Street. The demagogy is obvious enough. Simulated attacks upon monopoly, pious chants about the "preservation of political liberty" and "individual opportunity" are only too reminiscent of Hitler's pseudo-libertarian antics prior to March, 1933.

It was not Main Street which dominated Cleveland. Out of the 1,103 delegates to the convention, one-third were reactionary lawyers, one-third professional tory politicians and the rest mostly bankers and businessmen. These delegates represented Wall Street. They chose as their presidential candidate a nonentity ballyhooed into prominence by William Randolph Hearst. For the vice-presidency they picked Hearst's former general manager. And they drew up a platform dictated by Hearst and Wall Street. THE NEW MASSES has learned, on most reliable authority, that leading Hearst executives have been saying to each other: *The candidates are Hearst's; the platform is Hearst's.*

With this setup, it is easy to see why the Republican Party rallies around itself the most sinister political forces in the United States today. Their reactionary purposes are embodied in the platform adopted in Cleveland. The plank about Constitutional Government may pipe sweetly about "free enterprises." Nevertheless, stripped to its essentials, it is a shameless endorsement of the unlimited tyranny of the Supreme Court. The platform committee ignored even the mild request of the American Federation of Labor for a Constitutional amendment requiring a two-thirds vote by the Supreme Court on Constitutional questions.

Some clever demagog, politically sensitive to the popular indignation aroused by the most recent Supreme Court decision, got Landon to wire a reservation to this plank. The Kansas Coolidge says he favors a Constitutional amendment permitting States to adopt minimum-wage laws for women and children if such legislation could not be enacted within the present Constitution. That is designed to catch votes. But neither Landon nor the Republican platform has uttered a single word in favor of minimum-wage laws as such.

TORIES operating through the Republican party have no desire to ameliorate the condition of the people in the slightest degree. They even want to destroy what little has been done in this direction. The plank calling for "withdrawal of government from competition with private payrolls" is a direct assault upon the P.W.A. The plank calling for "the return of responsibility for relief administration to non-political local agencies" is a proposal to substitute the poor-house for federal and state relief. Anyone who wants to know just what the Republicans mean by this plank should consider carefully the scandalous situation in New Jersey (reported in THE NEW MASSES, May 12, 1936).

On security against unemployment and old age, the Republican platform glitters with especially noble phrases. Professional politicians cannot afford to ignore the votes corralled by the siren-songs of Doc Townsend, the late Huey Long and Father Coughlin. But what actual proposals does the platform make on this score? Could anything be more brazen than the clause which describes how even a limited social security is to be financed? The Republicans are ready to hand us "a direct tax widely distributed." This is an oblique way of saying that income and sales taxes are to be heaped upon the majority of the people, upon the *poor* of the nation. Wage-earners are to pay heavily for being slightly insured against the atrocities of the profit system.

But how beautifully the Republicans can explain everything! "All will be benefited and all should contribute." A vague social security will impartially bless the banker J. P. Morgan and the unemployed John Doe. Let them both pay for it. "How just is the law!" Anatole France once exclaimed. "It forbids the rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges."

IN THE labor plank, the platform is what you would expect from a convention including the head of Weirton Steel and other open-shoppers who fought union organization under the N.R.A. on the ground of "outside interference." Naively, hopefully or perhaps only as a cynical gesture, William Green of the A.F. of L. begged the platform committee to approve labor's right to organize "without interference by *employers.*" Instead, the Republicans pledge themselves to "protect the rights of labor to organize and to bargain collectively through representatives of its own choosing without interference from *anyone.*" Our italics indicate the catch. *Anyone* means organized labor. The Republican Party supports the company union against the genuine trade union. The A.F. of L. may not "interfere" with "labor" organizations established by the industrialists and their stool pigeons. There is not a line in the platform about high wages, or anti-injunction laws or the abolition of child labor.

When it came to Wall Street's interests the convention was on its toes. The budget is to be balanced "not by increasing taxes" on the rich but by "cutting expenditures" for the poor. The taxing power is to be used "for raising revenue and not for punitive or political purposes." The real meaning of these phrases will be found in the plank on relief. With millions living on the edge of starvation, the Republican Party does not dare openly advocate cutting or abolishing federal relief. But it indicates that purpose by declaring for local administration of relief to be financed chiefly by local revenues.

The money and banking clause, written by W. A. Aldrich of the Chase National Bank, carefully avoids all reference to gold. That's to catch the farm vote. But after conferring with certain Eastern interests (this euphemism for Wall Street belongs to the capitalist press, not to us), Governor Landon stated his own position on money: he construes the Republican declarations on a sound and stable currency to mean a currency not only expressed in terms of gold but "convertible into gold" whenever such action can be safely taken. The money plank together with the Topeka telegram is so contradictory and so full of loopholes that for all practical purposes a Republican administration, even if it wanted to shatter precedent by keeping campaign pledges, would be free to do anything it pleased. It could, for example, carry out Hearst's pet inflation schemes.

The climax of the ultra-reactionary platform is a plank on foreign affairs which echoes off Hearst's dearest isolationist phrases. At a time when fascist nations openly threaten the world with war, the United States is to stay out of "foreign alliances," out of the League of Nations, out of the World Court. The United States is to encourage aggressors by refusing to side with those nations which are intent upon preserving peace.

On "national defence," the Republican platform is as terse. It favors an army, navy and air force "adequate for our national defence"; and pledges cooperation with other nations in the limitation of armaments and control of traffic in arms. The New Deal war program is one the few Roosevelt policies which the Republicans fail to attack. This week Hearst papers said: "What Congress has done for the army is good—but it is not yet enough." The platform is clear. Chauvinist "isolation" is to be accompanied by an "adequate defense" in terms of still greater military expenditures.

This is the program of Hitler's friend, William Randolph Hearst, and of Hearst's candidate, Alfred Mossman Landon. It is this year's election platform of the American Liberty League, of the ultra-reactionaries behind the League. It is a plot hatched by big business to intensify its tyrannical domination of America.

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The Cleveland Plot

MARGUERITE YOUNG

CLEVELAND.

ON ONE side of the lobby stood a black poster in a handsome chromium frame. It portrayed a dripping red hand. Red lettering shouted, "New Deal Radicalism. Blot out the Red Influence. Vote Republican!" Opposite, a woman sat behind a small booth, selling a pamphlet. It was, "Bombshells for Wets and Reds," by William D. Upshaw. The dry Georgia demon whom Prohibition sent to Congress and nominated for President in 1932 was somewhere in the throng. His little green book began:

> If I had two bombshells big enough and destructive enough to do my bidding, I would touch off one under a pyramid of all Communist teachings and activities not only in the United States but in the whole wide world; and the other bomb of destruction would blow up every drop of intoxicating liquor beneath the sun.

The author acknowledged aid and inspiration from several persons. Among them were "that brave and brilliant woman," Elizabeth Dilling; that "outstanding champion of full-orbed Americanism," Hamilton Fish; and that "great American," William Randolph Hearst.

"Have the Republicans engaged Mr. Upshaw for the campaign?" asked the woman selling pamphlets.

"No," she said. "That is, I can't say. They certainly ought to."

Between booth and poster milled the flesh and blood of 1936 Republicanism. You could not tell the business man from the farmers by their tailoring; it was that class of farmer. Professional politicians and their women folk. If you watched long enough, you glimpsed the perfectly clad figures and heard the Harvard accents of the owners of almost every heavy industry of America. Out of the crowd, individuals emerged. Two young women pressed through, one asking impatiently, "Well, is he a tall, handsome blond or just a short brunette baboon?"

Then two familiar faces, two manufacturers who whispered softly, apprehensively, across a dining table last night. "John L. Lewis," one was mentioning, and seemingly ready with the classic company-union answer to the industrial organizing drive, "Just two good organizers would . . ." the words were lost in the hubbub. Rare was the intellectual in this gathering, except such intellectuals as Thomas Dixon, Jr., author of *The Klansman,* looking like a banker himself.

Cleveland was a composite picture of the burgeoning forces of American fascism. You winced at the visible portents. Should fascism triumph, what barbarity, what death of culture. Here were vulgarity, banality, innate cruelty and violence, together with a habit of superficial democracy reinforcing prejudices and social cruelties, unsurpassed perhaps by any other ruling class. In the ranks the mood was demoralization and a deep sense of defeat, but among the top-flight clique behind the scenes there was the calm that springs from decision plus the will and strategy to execute it. In these aspects, as much as in the formal proceedings, lies the significance of the Cleveland convention.

What took place in the auditorium beside Lake Erie was in a sense a ghost convention. Its main business, nominating a President, was begun last December 11, when Hearst visited Governor Landon and decided with a touching absence of subjectivity, "Landon can be nominated by the Republicans and elected. He understands the issues." By April several American Liberty Leaguers were saying frankly they would look with favor only upon Landon. The convention plan of their spokesmen in the Republican National Committee was to pick a good, sound, dependable Westerner who could take a build-up as embodying the traditional "opposition" of the agrarians beyond the Mississippi and have him "accepted" by the so-called conservative East, that is, by themselves. Already the country's most famous western liberal, Senator Borah, was bidding for the nomination, but significantly the lightning struck the Kansan's rod.

Everything worked perfectly; the East-West cleavage was avoided. There was really only one problem at Cleveland—the constitutional amendment plank on which Landon's liberal camp follower, William Allen White, had spoken in advance. This and the money plank formed the only tough platform issues. Ironically, the role of Borah, the liberal, and of President William Green, the labor chief, helped solve the equation, with an answer to the right of that to which Ogden L. Mills and Winthrop Aldrich of the Chase bank and the rest at one point agreed. The Morgan crowd wanted a return to the gold standard or something close to it, for they lost by Roosevelt's devaluation. Chase and Hearst and the industrialists holding commodities were willing to take that path. They had got almost all, if not all, they could safely take out of devaluation. The only opposition came from middle farmers, traditionally seeking inflationary outs, and they were voiceless because the Landon forces already had sold them out.

They met the Sage of Emporia's call for a constitutional amendment, therefore, by "accepting" it—that is, by agreeing to a plank sponsoring *state* minimum-wage laws with a constitutional amendment "if necessary"—in return for a sound money plank. Of course they did not care for the wage plank: White received a number of telegrams from manufacturers telling him bluntly that they wanted their twilight-zone guarantee against any labor legislation. However, they accepted.

Into this picture stepped Borah and Green. Borah roared against any constitutional amendment and, most of all, against any gold-standard plank; Green opposed any minimum-wage legislation whatsoever for male workers. Borah's performance was anticipated, but Green's was more than the financiers could expect. When he gave it before the resolutions committee there were such astonished cries of "Good! Good!" from Old Guardsmen Bingham and Edge and Moses that his words could scarcely be heard. It provided the key to the platform problem. They would drop the flat gold-standard plank to placate Borah and of course since one end of the bargain was off, the other was offered. The Constitutional Amendment plank could go, especially since labor's spokesman spurned it!

That was Wednesday night, when Borah beamed and Bill Green peevishly denied that American workers want a minimum-wage law. They preferred, he said, to use their own economic strength—a weapon used always at the peril of Green's wrathful strike stalling and sabotage, and one over which the shadow of forceful political interference from the masters' troops, spies and bullets has lengthened considerably of late. The money plank thus drafted was a hodge-podge and in the morning David Reed of Pennsylvania and his colleagues inserted a clarifying sentence: "We are opposed to further devaluation of the dollar." That was what made the Lion sore. He roared and staged a dramatic fit of temper on Thursday. However, that was how the platform remained— until Candidate Landon came out, safely beyond the point where the convention could object, for the vote-catching state minimum wage and the even further Right sound money declaration for convertibility, which the conservative East espoused.

On Tuesday the formal opening occurred, amidst details that made you wonder whether the script was from René Clair. They met, two thousand delegates and alternates and sixteen thousand visitors, and watched Chairman Fletcher go through the motions, recognizing the robots on his prepared agenda and even they were not there to ask for the floor. They sang a patriotic anthem, but not The Star Spangled Banner. A Negro quartet entertained them—while, outside, the Negro delegates from three southern states, supplanted by lily-white landlords and their flunkeys, cooled their heels. Then they adjourned until the night session at which Senator Steiwer delivered the keynote, a speech

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CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER

Turns Leftist Literature Into Party Propaganda

Supporting the axiom that nothing is impossible during a national political convention was the discovery yesterday by Common Pleas Judge Samuel E. Kramer that some Republican is using New Masses, leftist magazine, for propaganda ammunition.

Newsboys, Kramer said, were passing out copies of the magazine at Public Hall. Featured was an article called "The Borah Ledger," with a heavy debit side and a light credit side.

There was one conservative touch. The words New Masses, were neatly scissored away from the covers which were tamped SAMPLE.

We suggest Senator Borah mail this issue of THE NEW MASSES *to Alf Landon, Frank Knox, and John Hamilton.*—THE EDITORS.

filled with the anti-intellectualism, supernationalism and demagogy of the full-blown fascist, borrowing the phrases of the Left to hide its leap to the Right. Here stood Wall Street's minion, taking sidelong cracks at Wall Street, seeking to identify the New Deal at once as its instrument and as its antithesis, the revolutionary movement! Nor were expressions of the leftward mass swing that makes them tremble in their boots and resort to such demagogy lacking in the scene. That night, while delegates were puking around the Hollenden Hotel, stamping ground of the old Ohio Gang, a couple dropped into the bar in the Olmstead across the street. Said he, "Norman Thomas? Just another Roosevelt."

That was the day the resolutions committee went through the motions of hearing group spokesmen who had something to get into the platform, the theory being that their pleas were to be considered in a still-to-be-made program. They allotted seven minutes each. Ben Marsh of John Dewey's People's Lobby mentioned a rising standard of living in Russia. "Why don't you go back there?" they booed him down. The resolutions subcommittee was the tip-off on the "rout" of the Old Guard: it was overwhelmingly pro-Landon and overwhelmingly Big Business and comfortably Old Guard, with Bingham of Connecticut, Edge of New Jersey, Moses of New Hampshire and David Reed of Pennsylvania doing business at the same old stall; the "new" figures who were personified by its chairman, Herman N. Langworthy, a corporation lawyer thick as molasses with Banker-Publisher Eugene Meyer.

Typical of the "new" leadership is John Hamilton, Landon's campaign manager, who gained his first prominence when, as Speaker of the Kansas House, he dramatically killed ratification of the child labor amendment, and who was Departmental Commander of the American Legion at a time when it was angeled by the utilities. There is also Editor White. But ever at his elbow stands Henry Allen, former Governor and Senator, who visited Mussolini in 1922, returned and instituted Mussolini's industrial courts to break the railway shopmen's strike, and actually arrested White for defying them.

That so little appreciated power, the Banker-Publisher and the Industrialist-Publisher, came forward for the first time at this convention as the class policy-maker, the active manipulator as well the preparer of the mind of its mass victim. While the hard-working press poured forth the hogwash about the party's turn to the liberal side, its own bosses reclined in the back rooms of the Cleveland and the quiet Wade Park Manor, pulling the strings. Hearst kept cannily away. But his chief fixer, the urbane John Connally, was there presumably as head of International News. Connally was a very busy man, but he didn't write a line. His mission was to take the Hearst curse off Landon by telling the more discerning newsmen Landon hadn't a chance.

All the heavy industries were there—munitions, Governor Buck of Delaware, the du Pont son-in-law; chemicals, William Bell of American Cyanimide; autos, John Page of Graham-Page; steel, Weir; oil, Pew; railroads, William H. Vanderbilt and so on. The ones who were really all over the place, however, particularly in the decisive little conferences, were the publishers. Personifications of the dual role—Walter Lippmann who, while writing wistfully first about the need for and exuberantly later about the triumph of the "new leadership," was hobnobbing in the Wade Park Manor with the old masters who polished off the money plank in consultation with Ogden Mills and Winthrop Aldrich and their hack economist from Princeton, Edwin Kemmerer.

Wednesday was Herbert Hoover's last hour, as dismal as one of Schumann-Heink's absolutely last farewell concerts. As he walked back along the speakers' ramp in the klieg lights, somebody pointed to his escorts and asked, "Who are the pall bearers?" Indeed what warmth there was flowed from the thought that he was out of the running. There was no doubting the realization even here in the robots' chairs that this was the epilog of an era written off the people's books forever. Hoover himself recognized it in voicing the fascist-flavored incitement through which his kind seek to prepare the mass base for maintaining it despite the people.

Thursday they completed the platform and by the time it was adopted, a business requiring forty-five seconds, Borah was sulking home. He played a role. His pre-convention campaign, together with public reaction against the Liberty League dinner, constituted the main reason for the speedup of demagogy. But Borah at Cleveland was a sorry figure. To him went a representative of liberal peace organizations, to ask why there was only repudiation of the two existing international peace mechanisms, such as they are. He replied that was "a matter of principle." He complacently confirmed that he omitted munitions control and other measures. Then, reminded that his interlocutor represented thirty-four big groups, he pacified: "Wait—the omission of neutrality was an oversight. Get me Senator Nye." Nye *had* laid demands before the platform-makers, but had been told to chase himself because Borah was writing that plank.

When they finally stamped approval upon Landon, the "demonstramoter" was working overtime. It was a small black board equipped with lights that flashed between numbers up to 100. It registered seventy, even ninety when cowbell and horn and gazook combined in mechanical ferocity. It hit 100 when the bank came in and the delegates, for once, added a semi-human sound—the stirring, debauched Battle Hymn of the Republic: *"As he died to make men holy, let us die to make men free!"* They were invoking John Brown again. A moment earlier one of the Negro seconders had drooled his pride to support "a native of John Brown's state." Vandenberg and Knox, the two vice-presidential possibilities left, were sitting in the middle of the platform. Steiwer was there also, and between them a beefy old wheelhorse, picking his teeth.

Then I spied a man in overalls! Stone still with the dignity and the look of disgust that stamped him as real, he stood in the aisle on the press platform. I climbed over the benches and greeted him, "Congratulations, you're the first working man I've seen here." "Shake," he said.

"I bet you won't vote Republican!"

"Shake again!" His blue eyes fired.

"A labor man."

"Whom will you vote for, then?"

He was neither a Socialist nor a Communist, but a follower of Father Coughlin, who believed all the priest's guff about money, but happened to be a union electrician. He wanted to know how I got there, and he greeted the answer with another, "Shake again! *They* sure got a united-front *here,* all right."

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Hearst's Happy Landon

BRUCE MINTON

A YEAR ago Republican leaders were scratching their heads trying to figure out a Presidential candidate. By last week they had scratched up Alf Landon. The inflation of an unimportant governor of an unimportant state to the ballyhooed standard-bearer of the G.O.P. was done quickly. And one man did it—William Randolph Hearst.

Four years ago Hearst nominated Franklin D. Roosevelt through his spokesman, Senator McAdoo of California. Last year he was looking around for another man whom he could boom, one whom he could control more successfully than the ingrate now in office. Alf Landon had the advantage of being a nobody and having no political enemies worth counting. Hearst took him to his fascist bosom. This sudden wooing might have been embarrassing to anyone else, but not to honest Alf who has clung to Hearst and accepted all favors. Landon is Hearst's creation. Even "commoners," interested only in balancing budgets and getting to be president, appreciate the solid backing of scores of newspapers, of Brisbane, Runyon and other such talents. So Landon became Hearst's gift to the American people and incidentally his front. Hearst can't be president himself; but he can hope to hold the job by proxy.

He certainly picked a "deep one." Alf has the faculty of keeping his mouth shut and letting Hearst supply just the right campaign hot-air about simplicity, frugality and homespun virtues. As a political leader, Landon has a splendid caution. His fighting reply on any question is "I'll take it under advisement." He wants to be all things to all people. He wants especially to be Hearst's white-headed boy.

Capitalist politicians have a penchant for finding mediocrities and dubbing them "men of the people." Alf Landon has all the qualifications. Like Coolidge, he has never been abroad. Like Harding, he was completely unknown before he was boomed for president. Landon is one of those earthy men who says whenever occasion requires it, "ain't" and "purt near," "folks" and "heck." He remarks of himself, "I am a liberal man, now getting conservative." Just a dirt farmer who never lived on a farm, a typical American lad who made his own way alone helped only by a father who had struck oil.

Alf was born in Pennsylvania in 1887, and as Hearst feature-writers rhapsodize, "he was reared in Ohio and matured on the wind-swept plains of the 'typical prairie state' of Kansas." In 1904, the Landon family moved to Independence, Kansas, pioneering and incidentally looking for oil. They found it. Young Alf entered the University of Kansas where he studied hard and received average marks, being a good sport by playing some football and building himself up for practical life by keeping accounts for his Greek-letter fraternity. He was no tightwad: when he graduated, he presented the fraternity with a cuspidor.

In 1908, Alf was admitted to the bar. But avid for practical life, he turned his back on law and took a job which his father got for him in a bank. Here was Alf all set for life, an up-and-coming banker, but he refused to tread the easy road. The pioneering spirit broke out like hives and he itched for adventure. Young Alf struck out for himself, into the oil-promoting business. He struck oil. From then on he was "comfortably fixed" with a million dollars or so.

When the war came, nothing could keep him from enlisting. He fought his way through, serving as first-lieutenant in the Chemical Warfare Division at Lakehurst, New Jersey. Once his fighting days ended, he returned to Kansas and picked up the threads of his life. He had always had a flair for politics. Never "regular," something of a rebel, he had been a Bull Mooser when Theodore Roosevelt bolted the Republican Party in 1912. Later he supported William Allen White for governor on an independent ticket. But though hot-headed youth is radical, the older Landon, like his mentor, William Randolph Hearst, became more conservative with time. He served as secretary of Governor Allen (Republican) for six weeks. He became chairman of the Republican state committee. He handled the campaign of Governor Reed (Republican). And in 1932, he ran for governor on a platform dedicated to economy, reduction of taxes and the "alleviating of suffering in Kansas." He served for two years and a grateful party machine reelected him, the only Republican governor in the Midwest.

Alf stands on his record as Governor. He is first and foremost a budget-balancer. "We must cut some place," he said, "and it will hurt wherever we start." He reduced the wages of state employes—25 percent except for those earning $100 or less and then only 10 percent. He even cut those on relief, but he shared in the reduction himself by voluntarily returning $1,500 of his $5,000 a year salary and thus being forced to make up the balance of his expenses as governor from the income of his million-dollar or so "comfortable fortune." Day laborers on state highway jobs were given work of from eight to twelve days a month at 25 cents an hour.

The "horse-and-buggy" governor, as he is affectionately labeled by his publicity department, eliminated useless jobs and departments in the state administration. This meant that the remaining employes took them over and worked faster and heavier and received less pay for more time. The state penitentiary was a firetrap and the insane asylum overcrowded (the insane were put in county jails with other prisoners) but Alf Landon stood by his guns and refused to waste state funds on luxuries such as humane treatment of the mentally deranged or proper food and housing for prisoners. And he reduced highway expenditures, throwing many men out of work.

On the relief problem, Hearst's "rebel of the West" pursued a courageous, economical program. He did not appropriate or allow the state legislature to appropriate, in Harry Hopkins' words, "one thin dime." Of the $26,246,579 spent in Kansas on woefully inadequate relief, the counties and municipalities put up $7,778,628 (taken out of the hides of school-teachers and minor officials) and the federal government supplied the rest. For the first half of 1935, the federal government appropriated 79½ percent of the relief funds in Kansas.

Governor Landon balanced the Kansas budget. He seldom mentions the $66,723,817 which the A.A.A. spent in the state, the $32,333,813 which the P.W.A. appropriated and the other millions which came from C.W.A., the C.C.C. and emergency relief. Alf steeled himself and cut teachers' pay, the appropriations to schools and to the University of Kansas. Schools closed in Kansas. Teachers receive as low as $25 a month—when they get it, for teachers are not paid so regularly despite the Governor's model business methods. The Kansas Coolidge has balanced the budget—at the expense not of the oil promoters or the bankers or the big business men (their taxes have actually been reduced) but at the expense of the farmers, the workers, the intellectuals and professionals, the small middle-class groups. Landon balanced the budget by making the New Deal pay for the deficit.

Under Landon's enlightened rule in Kansas, schools closed; workers struck (and the great "liberal - getting - conservative" sent troops to gas and shoot strikers); the unemployed protested, and once more troops met them, dispatched by Alf. Hearst has an eye for a good man when he sees one! State employes were speeded up and their salaries slashed and the governor brought back conditions similar to those of 1854 when the state was known as "Bleeding Kansas."

Landon, the oil promoter, the economical administrator, appeals to certain men, the good, conservative, backbone - of - America men who want taxes reduced so that they can amass greater and greater "comfortable fortunes." Men like Hearst and those who rally to the Liberty League. Men who have smelled oil on Landon and, like Alf in

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his young days, were lured by the smell. W. G. Skelly, president of the Skelly Oil Company, Lew Wents and Wirt Franklin, oil men from Oklahoma, Joseph N. Pew, vice-president of Sun Oil, who gave $5,000 to the Liberty League and whose family contributed $20,000 to the Republican Party, Edwin R. Cox of Philadelphia, vice-president of the Atlantic Refining Company—all good oil men know what an oil promoter who takes up his residence in the White House can do.

That's Alf Landon, pioneer of the West, who with only his father's fortune behind him managed to strike oil and find William Randolph Hearst.

Régal de Sweckey

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WHEN the Republican Party dies, across its heart will be found engraved the simple word "Dickinson." For at Cleveland last week the booming voice of the great Senator from Iowa was stilled. The one man with a sound plan for the salvation of the party was ignored in the maniacal babble about Alf.

Nothing indicates the astounding luck of President Roosevelt more fully that the circumstance of Senator Dickinson and the dog meat. It is true that the senator originally had the thing by the wrong end, but that might have been altered by an astute adviser. When the white-haired son of the plains rose in his seat in the Senate and denounced the administration for bringing the populace to a diet of dog meat, the smiling man in the White House, temporarily, smiled no more. Here was an issue which the Republicans could capitalize to the fullest. As a native New Yorker, Mr. Roosevelt knew what might be done with a platform containing a single plank promising the common folk a diet fit for a dog. Whether the budget could stand the strain would be a matter for Mr. Andrew Mellon and his associates; it is enough to know that the Republicans would be swamped by the gratitude of a people who had never hitherto received such attention from an American government.

The Republicans, not keeping an ear close to the ground and surely never reading a newspaper appearing east of Kansas City, were evidently not in touch with the state of the canine world. They had not, for example, been aware of Bonwit Teller in New York who so openly tipped their hand in the weeks prior to the convention by advertising:

LEASH

Our Exclusive New Cologne for Good House Dogs

Every summer an increasing number of women come in to buy cologne for their pets. And they say even the sternest mastiffs are pleased because it makes them socially acceptable at all times. Dogs hate to be banished from company. So we've had an exclusive deodorizing cologne with a nice, clean woodsy scent brewed specially for them. Nothing sissy about it. As refreshing as a run under the sprinkler. A perfect week-end hostess gift. 4-ounce bottle $3.50

But this is only on the social side of dogdom and it is equally possible that Mr. Dickinson's constituents could get acceptable results in the way of perfume by melting certain combinations of corn shocks, old potatoes and new mortgages. Henry Ford is particularly good at utilizing the products of the farm, but one has only to state the proposition to understand the irresistible appeal it would have for the voter.

The great swell of votes would come, however, when Senator Dickinson campaigned through the industrial East and the South with promises of a good, substantial dog diet for all loyal Americans. With him he could bear the menus which are offered dog owners on such transatlantic liners as the Queen Mary, the Normandie, the Europa. On the Normandie not only is the menu fulsome, but it is translated into both English and French in case there should be hounds lacking in the social graces.

POUR VOTRE TOUTOU . . .
MADAME . . .

MENU

Le Plat de Médor

(Consomme de Boeuf — Toasts — Légumes)
Beef Consomme — Toasts — Vegetables

Le Régal de Sweckey
(Carottes — Viande Hachée — Epinards — Toasts)
Carrots — Chopped Meat — Spinach — Toasts

La Gâterie "Normandie"
(Haricots Verts — Poulet Haché — Riz Nature)
(Arros de jus de Viande et de Biscottes en Poudre)
Green Beans, Chopped chicken, Boiled rice
accompanied by broth and dog biscuits

Danish Dog's Delight
(Os de Côte de Boeuf, de Jambon et de Veau)
Bones of ribs of beef, ham and veal

Le Régime Végétarien des Dogs
(Tous les légumes et toutes les pâtes Alimentaires)
All fresh vegetables and noodle pastes.

One has only to consider this for a moment to know what effect it would have among sections of share-croppers, groups of textile workers and an East Side New York audience. La Gâterie "Normandie," which I am informed can be translated as Normandie Treat, would be enough to carry Mississippi if there were not another word spoken by Mr. Dickinson. What a chance the man had and how stupid the Republicans not to ignore Alf in a crucial year!

Faced with Dickinson running on a platform of Every American Is as Good as Any Dachshund, the Democrats would be in a panic by September and utterly routed by November. What would the people of this great country care about T.V.A. or H.O.L.C. or resettlement when they could be assured of Le Régal de Sweckey?

What chance would any political party have against Senator Dickinson with his insidious campaign of flattery, his promises of a life which millions of citizens had never enjoyed? The life of Rover, indeed. He would only need a supply of posters founded upon a recent advertisement of Saks Fifth Avenue store in New York.

SALE OF DOGS' BEDS, $2.95

Regularly 6.50

900 solidly woven beds of yellow reed interwoven with red, blue or green. Fitted with kapok with washable jaspe slip covers.

26 x 18½, reg. 6.75 NOW 3.45
29 x 21, reg. 7.00 NOW 3.95

This would have just about clinched matters for Senator Dickinson. Food, lodging and new cologne—all up to the best kennel standards—would have been overwhelmingly attractive in sections where a $7 bed would have struck the inhabitants as something fit only for a Marie Antoinette. For Mr. Dickinson to have come out flatly for a program which would have meant that American citizens were in the future to be treated as well as airedales would have been daring and revolutionary, but it is conceivable that it would have captured the imagination of the nation. There is always the possibility of a rebuff by the Supreme Court on the theory that it would be immoral to compel a Scotch terrier to rest in a bed 26 x 18½, reg. 6.50, NOW 3.45, when he might prefer a modest spot in the lee of a woodshed, but the election would be over before a test case could be carried up.

There would be the usual protests that such paternalism would soften the civil population and there is certainly scientific basis for the thought that the men of the Ozarks might be entirely thrown off their routine by coming suddenly upon Le Plat de Médor, a dish undoubtedly too rich for the native palate, but the greatest outcry would come from organizations fearing that too much food for the unemployed would mean too little for the dogs. A campaign with Dickinson and dog meat on one side and the S.P.C.A. on the other would be a spectacle of some magnificence. The position of the Liberty League, however, would be quite simple, being against both man and dog.

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Who Backs The Black Legion?

The Mysterious Dickinson, Stooge

JOHN L. SPIVAK

DETROIT.

THE list of those upon whom the wrath of the secret terroristic Black Legion fell is sprinkled, oddly enough, not so much with politicians and men who beat their wives but with labor organizers ranging from conservative A.F. of L. and independent union men to known Communists. The list of arsons and bombings which have already been confessed to by arrested members of the Black Legion are chiefly those of labor and radical meeting places and the homes of active union men.

The labor angle of the Black Legion has scarcely been touched and the news which does appear as a result of confessions is usually buried in the stories. Yet, though even this angle would not, I believe, reach to the real higher-ups pulling the strings of this fantastic organization an inquiry into the Black Legion's relation with the automotive industry and particularly with Henry Ford's amazing private secret service operations, would produce some interesting facts.

Take the case, for instance, of the Superintendent of Private Employment Bureaus for the State of Michigan, M. Wesson Dickinson. His work is closely interlocked with the automotive industry and Mr. Dickinson got his first push into the political arena from a not-so-mysterious "high official in the Ford plant."

Mr. Dickinson is a tall, rather heavy-set man approaching the sixties. He has a slight twitch under his right eye which is quiescent most of the time but which goes into full play when you start asking questions about the Black Legion. Mr. Dickinson was once a rich man, a very rich man "in worldly goods" as he explains modestly, but between 1929 and 1931 something went haywire and he lost everything. In 1931 he was down and out, to use his own phrase.

Today Mr. Dickinson sits behind an unpretentious desk in Room 305 of the Transportation Building in Detroit, flanked by an enormous American flag standing in the corner apparently ready to be waved whenever the opportunity offers itself. Mr. Dickinson's ancestors landed in 1621, or some such date, in Massachusetts and since then dropped arms and legs all over the country's battlefields. He himself was a sergeant in the World War but saved his skin. I mention this to show that Mr. Dickinson's background is patriotic.

Though Mr. Dickinson was a rich man at one time, he has never forgotten the days when he worked as a laborer on a farm for fifty cents a day. In 1931, when he was down and out, he and his wife left their eleven-room house and moved into a small apartment. He cast off his fine clothes, stood in line at the Ford plant and got a job like anybody else. He worked in the stock department for about six months, getting six dollars a day. After some six months in the stock department he was suddenly transferred to the Garden Department in the Employment Building. The pay was the same—six dollars a day. The only difference was that now he wore a white collar and had a desk job.

"How did they happen to transfer you?" I asked.

"That's a mystery to me," he said, shaking his head with a puzzled air. "I don't know why they picked me. But one day one of the officials called me in and said that beginning Monday I'd be working in the Garden Department and needn't come in dressed like a laborer any more."

The man who was to become superintendent of private employment bureaus for the state, worked in the Garden Department from March until November, 1932. Then the zephyr-like sound of an angel's wings appeared over the Ford plant. One of the high officials called him in one morning and said:

"Wesson, how'd you like to be general manager in the Secretary of State's office in Detroit?"

Naturally Wesson liked it; and funny enough, on January 1, 1933, M. Wesson Dickinson, a laborer in the Ford stock department, became manager of the important office of Michigan's Secretary of State.

I used to be a great reader of Horatio Alger when I was a kid and I can recognize an Horatio Alger story when I hear it. Rich man who was wiped out rises from lowly laborer to powerful political figure.

"The office of the manager of the Secretary of State is a political plum," I ventured. "Lots of politicians would like it. Why should it be given to you? Did you have any political power?"

Mr. Dickinson sighed. "I was never in politics in my life until recently. I was not in politics when I got the appointment."

"Then why should it be given to you—a total stranger to the Governor or the Secretary of State—a man with no political influence or power?"

"I really don't know," he assured me blandly. "It's a mystery. It's always been a mystery to me. Why, Mister, my wife and I used to sit around and puzzle over it for hours and we never could understand it."

"Perhaps if you told me the name of the high Ford official who asked you if you wanted to be manager of the Secretary of State's office, we'd be able to solve the mystery," I suggested.

"Oh, his name doesn't matter. He was just a high Ford official."

"But Ford officials don't normally pass out political plums."

"He may have heard the job was open—"

"Were you giving satisfactory service at the Ford plant?"

"Oh, yes, I did my work as well as I knew how."

"How would the Ford plant benefit if you were manager of the Secretary of State's office?"

"There was no connection between my duties in the Secretary of State's office and the Ford plant," he said quickly. "I handled state licenses in the Secretary's office. That was my job."

"It does look like a mystery, doesn't it? The Ford people stand to gain nothing by your new political job. So they give up a man whose services are valuable to them, just to do him a favor. Was the official who offered this political plum to you a friend of yours?"

"No, I never saw him before he called me in and asked if I wanted the job."

"Why should he have picked you—of all the thousands of people in the plant—a man whom he did not know, who had worked at Ford's only a short time?"

"That's the mystery. I never could figure it out."

"What's the objection to telling me who this high official is?"

"Oh, I'd rather not."

"Wasn't this high official Harry Bennett, chief of Ford's secret service?" I asked gently.

The twitching under his right eye became a little pronounced.

"I would rather not say," he said slowly.

"You know Harry Bennett?"

"Possibly I've seen him and talked to him once or twice in my life," he said, spreading his arms out on his desk and fiddling with some papers.

"You'd rather not say that it was Harry Bennett who offered you the job?"

"I'd rather not say," he said slowly.

"Did you have any dealings with Harry Bennett while you were manager of the Secretary of State's office?"

"Not directly. I dealt with two of his men—just routine matters like trying to get

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people jobs in the Ford plant. I'd write letters recommending them and some would get the jobs and some would not."

"Was getting people jobs in the Ford plant through the head of the secret service part of your job of handling state licenses?"

"No," he said, staring out of the window. "It was just one of those things that a fellow does. I was a laborer once. I worked—worked hard. Now when a fellow came into my office and needed a job and I thought I could place him by a note to Mr. Bennett, why, naturally, I'd try. I want to see people get work. Then, too, my job was a sort of political job and politicians have to try to help people—"

"I see. Now, weren't the people for whom you'd try to get jobs members and officials of the Black Legion?"

The twitching became so pronounced that his right eye was almost closed at times. He rose from his chair and walked over to the window, shaking his head.

"Mister," he said vigorously, "I never heard of the Black Legion until I read about it in the papers."

"How long were you in the Secretary of State's office?"

"Until December, 1934," he said, returning to his chair. "I resigned after another man was elected Secretary of State."

"Had you, between the time you took the office of manager of the Secretary of State's office and the time you resigned, become an important power politically?"

"No," he smiled. "I never was an important power. I ran for a minor office and got 15,000 votes. That's nothing."

"How did you happen to get this job?" Isn't this a political plum, too?"

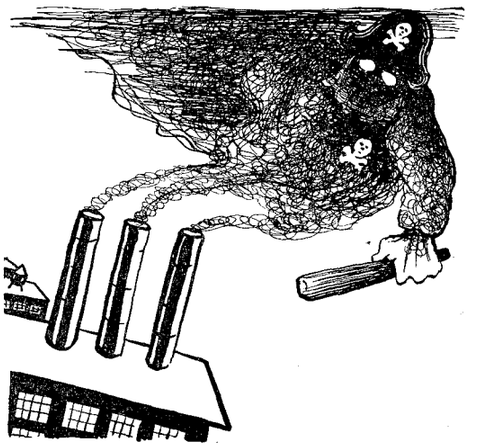
He smiled and shook his head.

"Mister," he said, leaning forward and gazing earnestly into my eyes, "it may sound strange to you, but why I was picked for this job is also a mystery. I was appointed by Governor Fitzgerald. I never knew anything about it until I was appointed. I happened to be in Lansing one day after I resigned and I went in to see the Governor—Governor Fitzgerald—just to pay my respects, you know."

"Yes?"

"I was just standing there saying hello to the Governor when he called in George Clark and said, 'Say, George, get that diploma for Wesson for the private employment office,' and George Clark went out and came back with my appointment as superintendent of the Private Employment Bureaus in the State of Michigan. Yes, sir, that's exactly how it happened. I was glad to get it, of course, because I had been out of a job for a month. I was appointed to this office on February 6, 1935 and I had resigned from the State Secretary's office in December, 1935, so you see I had been out of a job for about a month and—"

"That was a break, wasn't it? No money. No job. No political influence. Not especially friendly with the Governor and you



Russell T. Limbach

walk in to pay your respects and the Governor just hands you a political plum."

"Well, everybody gets the breaks some time, you know. I had gotten some bad ones for a while and I was about due for a lucky one."

"But what puzzles me is why the Governor should have handed it to you when politicians with power want it—"

"That's a mystery—" he began with a broad motion of a hand.

"You couldn't possibly have controlled 30,000 votes and got the appointment in return for it?"

"Thirty thousand votes?" he repeated with a puzzled air. "Why, the most I ever got—"

"Fifteen thousand when you ran for a minor office?"

"That's right. So how could I control 30,000 votes?"

"The Black Legion strength in Michigan is estimated at 30,000—"

"Mister, I told you I had never heard of Black Legion until I read about it in the newspapers."

"Yes. I remember. Haven't you been very friendly with Harry Z. Marx for some five years—just from about the time you were down and out?" (The Wolverine Republican League at a meeting of which it was decided to kill Charles A. Poole, a young W.P.A. worker, had its headquarters in Marx's office, 2120 Union Guardian Building. Marx was an officer of the Wolverine League.)

"Yes. I've known Harry Marx for a long time."

"He's your personal attorney, isn't he?"

"Yes."

"How well do you know Art Lupp, Sr.?"

"Not very well. I met him maybe half a dozen times."

"And scarcely knowing him you signed his application for a pistol permit testifying to his integrity and character?"

(Art Lupp, Sr., State Commander of the Black Legion and an officer in the Wolverine Republican League, is under arrest charged, with others, in a Black Legion conspiracy to murder Arthur L. Kingley, editor of the Highland Parker, a community newspaper. Before Lupp was placed under arrest, he admitted having hired attorneys to defend those arrested for Poole's murder.)

"I wish to God I had never signed h pistol application," he said feelingly. "Y of course I signed it. But I don't rememb it. I probably signed others. I don't re member whose applications I signed. Why should I be dragged into this terrible mess because I signed the application of a man connected with an unpatriotic, damnable organization whose very principles are abhorrent to any right thinking American? Why, my ancestors fought to preserve the liberty upon which this country—"

"Do you know Leslie J. Black, president of the Wolverine Republican League, now charged with conspiracy to murder Kingsley?"

"Yes. I've known him for some time but I've never had any dealings with him or knew anything about the Black Legion—"

"When you were managing the office of the Secretary of State didn't you meet in your offices with Lupp and Black, Marx and Marx's partner, Marion Leacock—"

"I don't remember who used to come into my office," he exclaimed, rising again from his chair. "Maybe they came into my office—"

"I mean didn't you meet with them and others every week—"

"Mister, I don't know what you're driving at. I tell you I never heard of the Black Legion until I read about it in the newspapers."

"How does it happen that Ford's secret service knows about these meetings held in the offices of Secretary of the State of Michigan? They have records of your meetings?"

The twitching under his right eye almost closed it.

"I can't understand what you are talking about."

"Why did Harry Bennett get you the job as manager of the Secretary of State's office?"

"I don't know how I got the job," he insisted. "I told you it was a mystery to me. I would rather not say who the Ford official is."

I had no authority to make the Superintendent of Private Employment Agencies for the State of Michigan tell what Ford high official put him in his job and for what purpose. The proper legal officers can—if they wish. If they make Wesson Dickinson talk they may find out just why so many labor organizers were killed, the meeting places and homes of labor organizers and union officials burned and bombed. Personally I doubt whether the state's legal machinery will inquire into this. Henry Ford's secret service is too powerful in the state's machinery and it may lead to things the automotive barons would rather avoid. Possibly a federal investigating body could make M. Wesson Dickinson *and* Harry Bennett talk.

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Culture... Culture... Culture...

JOSHUA KUNITZ

"THE Russians have gone batty over jazz," says one of the tourists in the coupé. "Everywhere one sees swaying couples, in every restaurant, café and park. It seems there is a universal, all-pervading jazz epidemic."

An amusing episode comes to mind. It was on the S.S. Smolny, en route to Leningrad. White night, phonograph, jazz. The sailors and stewardesses were making whoopee with the American and English tourists. Everybody seemed to be enjoying himself, except the very earnest looking Third Mate who stood leaning against the railing.

"Why don't you, Comrade, get into this?" I tried to make conversation.

"I don't do that kind of dancing," he replied, a vague note of disapproval in his voice.

Jocularly, I suggested that dancing with foreign tourists was a diplomatic act. Those people were going to the Soviet Union. To win them over personally, on an intimate, friendly basis, wouldn't be bad diplomacy. "That's politics, Comrade, good politics—cultural contact one might say—one broad united front. . . ."

"It would be pretty sad if our diplomacy would have to sink to the level of jazz," retorted the solemn Mate. "Soviet culture is not jazz. The tourists who are any good can be reached on a higher plane. The others don't count."

"Yes, but—" I tried to argue with him. In vain. It was obvious the fellow was the worst kind of a sectarian.

A wise-cracking tourist observed: "He didn't begin to appreciate the vast possibilities for a united front from both above and below contained in jazz!"

THE Third Mate was, to be sure, a unique specimen. In ten months in the Soviet Union I didn't find another like him. Quite the contrary, the naive fervor with which the Soviet citizenry has gone in for jazz is amazing and to American tourists earnestly engaged in solving the problems of the world revolution, a little distressing.

There was Emily, our charming young Intourist guide last summer. In Yalta she met a young fellow, a school mate, now working in a factory. The fellow became so proficient in jazz that he spent his vacation in Yalta conducting classes in modern dancing and earning, in addition to his vacation money, 1500 rubles for the month.

We invited him to join us for supper. He came in linen slacks and white shirt open at the collar—a typical Harvard junior. Before long, I am sorry to say, the fellow became somewhat of a nuisance. He outdanced all the American and English fellows. The girls, young and not so young, flocked to him. Each time he brought one of our girls back to the table, she was all flustered and thrilled and disgustingly lyrical about his extraordinary accomplishments. Emily sat by my side. She displayed more pride over her friend's dancing than she ever displayed over the Gorky automobile plant, the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, or any of the other great Soviet marvels we visited during our trip.

"He is just an ordinary worker," she kept on assuring me. The implication was: Look, just an average Soviet worker, yet he reached the very pinnacle of contemporary culture.

EVEN the Union of Soviet Writers has organized classes in dancing. Lessons are given every afternoon in the writers' club. When you call on any Soviet writer, be he old, or young, or middle-aged, you are as likely as not to discover that he is at the club taking his lesson.

They dance solemnly, watching their feet execute the latest and most elaborate steps conceivable.

There was a time when I myself was fond of dancing, but I am cured now. I never felt so self-conscious about my advanced age as I have been made to feel in the land of the Soviets. The first time I got on the floor of the writers' club—it was at one of those regular dances given on every eve of the free day—I felt hundreds of curious appraising eyes following every step I made. I was an American, and much was expected from me. What a fizzle I turned out to be! My technique was ludicrously antiquated, it harked all the way back to the early 'twenties, to my college days, to the antediluvian Coolidge era. My Russian partner arched her eyebrows and looked astonished. Some of my acquaintances began to express veiled doubts as to the authenticity of my American training. I have never danced since.

IN the Red Army, too, I understand, all the commanders are now engaged in mastering intricacies of fox trot, tango, etc. The story may be apocryphal, but, as I heard it, it all started with Voroshilov's discomfiture in Angora. At the numerous receptions and balls arranged by Mustafa Kemal, the Soviet commanders—civil war heroes all, bold fighters, excellent Bolsheviks, etc., etc.—found themselves in the excruciating predicament of not being able to match terpsichorean skill with their Turkish colleagues. "It is damned humiliating," grumbled one of the staff. "We must overtake and surpass," declared another. "There is not a fortress we Bolsheviks cannot take," replied Voroshilov confidently. And now the Red Army fox trots!

THE joy of my little Russian-Polish-French-Portuguese-Algerian-Jewish traveling companion, the future Soviet correspondent for most of the European press, is marred by only one thing, the difficulty of obtaining living quarters in Moscow. Alas, I can give him neither encouragement nor hope. I explain to him that even I, with all my close contacts in Moscow, had been without a room for months, and that it was only by a piece of extraordinary luck that I had finally found one.

I am pelted with questions. These tourists want to know everything, how I got the room, from whom, what type of a room it was, had I any modern conveniences, who were my neighbors, how much rent did I pay, how is a house run since there are no landlords, etc., etc. What these tourists, like all tourists, miss is a genuine sense of the texture, the intimate details, the inside feel of Soviet life. In my answers I try to remedy some of this lack, reconstructing as many details, however insignificant, as come to mind.

I LEARNED of the room in 10 Novo Basmannia Street from an American friend who lived in the same house. The owner of the room, Zherebovich, an engineer, was being sent to Saratov for two years to build a distillery for the production of industrial alcohol from sawdust. He was taking his family, consisting of a wife, a mother-in-law and a child with him. (A characteristic detail: a family of four, the family of an engineer, lived in one room.)

The first time I visited Zherebovich I was astonished to find him sitting at a Singer machine, sewing. It turned out, that the engineer, a Jew, had been a custom tailor since childhood. When the revolution broke out, he had joined the Bolsheviks. After fighting for three years in the Civil War, he had come to Moscow, where he had worked at his trade until seven years ago. Then he was sent to school. After two years of good work as an engineer, he was now being put in charge of a ten million ruble construction job in Saratov. (Can you imagine an American engineer, two years out of school, being entrusted with such responsible work?) Now before leaving for Saratov, Zherebovich was busy sewing a coat for his little girl. He expatiated on the intricacies of good tailoring with as much fervor as on the complexities of structural engineering. But he declined to discuss the financial details involved in subletting the room. When that question came up he hastened out of the house.

ZHEREBOVICH'S wife was an awful creature—a philistine, an upstart and very much of a cheat. She was simply overwhelmed by the thought that she was the wife of an engineer, a "big engineer." She pursed her lips cutely, and screwed up her eyes, and held her pinky at a right-angle to the glass of

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tea in her hand, and spoke, oh so languidly, nasally, "aristocratically." How Zherebovich, a good, simple fellow, ever tolerated such a woman is beyond me.

Nor could I ever understand how he lived in the same room with that mother-in-law of his, that big, gross-looking woman, reclining on the big, gross-looking couch. As I learned later, she was detested by everyone in the apartment. In the old days she had been the wife of a moderately well-to-do Jewish dry-goods merchant. Her husband died at the beginning of the N.E.P., and she carried on and developed the business to the very end of the N.E.P. According to the neighbors, she was secretly doing a bit of speculating, liquidating some of the stock which she had managed to salvage. She would parade through the hall of the apartment with her nose way up in the air, contemptuous of hoi-polloi. Even in my brief conversation with her she managed to refer to Communists as "they" and to the gentile neighbors as *poierim*—both words indicating her attitude of utter disdain.

And her daughter was a chip of the old block. "I must be paid for six months in advance . . ." she nasalized, "*valuta*. . . . I have to buy clothes in the Torgsin [the Torgsin was still operating then]. You know how it is. . . . Zherebovich is an engineer, we'll have to meet people, contacts, visits. . . ."

The repulsive little bourgeoise was ready to break the law, to speculate and charge for the room six times as much as she herself was paying for it, just in order to keep up with some imagined or real Soviet Joneses.

But one cannot afford fastidiousness when one is trying to get a room in Moscow. I promptly paid all the "lady" asked for.

NUMBER 10 Novo Basmannia Street is a huge house, built before the war, with elevator, electricity, gas, hot water, baths, toilets, modern plumbing. The house has six entrances, and about eighty apartments of various sizes. The one in which I lived, Number 8, accommodated five other families, some with children—twenty-five people in all. We had one large communal kitchen and two lavatories. There were apartments in the same house serving as many as ten families.

It was Kaganovich, I think, who said that not until the housing problem was solved would Socialism be solidly established in the Soviet Union. He was not exaggerating. The discomforts, trials and exasperations caused by the acutely inadequate housing conditions in most Soviet cities are universally known. It will probably take another decade before the problem is completely solved. In the meanwhile, life in a Soviet apartment is, to express it mildly, not sweet. Everybody knows your affairs, loves, hatreds, linens, moles, esthetic principles, food preferences and health habits. Under the circumstances, it is surprising how comparatively peaceful the average citizen's domestic life is. Fights and quarrels and intrigues occur, but not nearly as often as one might expect.

MARFUSHA'S mother went to church every Sunday and holiday. When she returned she always reported to me how crowded the church was: "Such a jam, people actually fainted." Once I asked her a mean question: "How many churches are there left in Moscow?" The old woman looked so pained that I hastened to add, "There must be hundreds of them." "More than *they* know," she said haughtily and walked off. She never talked to me about the church again.

ON the whole the Russians are an amiable lot. Once I discovered bedbugs in my couch. The thought of them, more than their actual malice, kept me awake all night. I confided my secret to Marfusha. After work she and Polia came in with kerosene, essence of vinegar, a miniature torch, some soft soap and started out on a hunt which lasted fully three hours.

The news that bedbugs dared disturb the sleep of the American comrade spread through the apartment. For days after, every morning, dozens of times I had to answer the same

—Allow me to answer instead of my husband. He's very shy and he's certainly not used to answering for himself. I am for children, but they spoil the shape of a pretty woman. That's why I have this dog Jack. He harmonizes with my clothes and figure. Children have to have shoes, clothes, while Ivan Petrovich is scarcely able to provide me with new clothes every season. That is why our marital life is purely spiritual in character. Now I write to him from Crimea—now he writes to me from the Caucasus. Wifely duties? Don't know. Haven't heard. Although a young man in the Sochy summer resort did mention them to me as he was sending me back to my husband in Moscow.

—What do they want me to do? Support my family? Certainly. But it should only be taken out of my basic salary [the minor part of the income of the Soviet employe]. As it is they take out 35 roubles and 9 kopecks every month. What? I should help my parents! I don't refuse. Last year I sent father a package of smoked fish by parcel post collect. Let the old man eat, I have nothing against it. But why is the law so heartless? If things go on this way, I shall never buy an automobile.

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solicitous question as if I were suffering from a grave illness: "Well, Comrade, how are the bedbugs?" I felt ashamed to be disturbed by such trifles as bedbugs in the midst of the glorious victories of the second Five-Year-Plan and the thunderous achievements of the Stakhanovites.

THE wonderful thing about the Soviet Union is the host of colorful, symbolical impressions it stamps indelibly upon one's conscious and subconscious memory, incomparably more so than any other country, I am sure.

The avidly curious tourists, the shaking of the train, the mixed strains of the old anthem "God Save the Czar" and the "Internationale" I seem to detect in the rhythm of the wheels, all together, in some mysterious fashion, bring back to mind an endless chain of events, meetings, conversations, observations and contrasts, which, when they actually occurred, I had scarcely noticed, but which now come back fresh and luminously meaningful.

When one is in the U.S.S.R. the minor but numerous irritations from the surviving past often obscure the grandeur of what is being done at present. It is only when one is on the way out, in retrospect, that the emergent, rather than the receding in Soviet life, begins to loom larger and larger. One gains the required perspective, and things assume a different significance.

THE lady "author" drops her cigarette butt on the coupé floor, she steps on it, flushes, picks it up hastily, and demonstratively deposits it in the cuspidor. General hilarity! "She must have received a lesson in Soviet culture!"

Culture . . . culture . . . culture . . . culture. . . . In Moscow I grew inexpressibly weary of the word. At times I felt as anti-cultural as a Nazi. You cross the street before the light changes and you are exposed to a militiaman's lecture on culture; you jump on a street car while in motion, you step off a street car before it stops, you get on a street car at the wrong end—the front instead of the back—and almost invariably you will hear a long discourse about culture. You walk into a movie house, a theater, a restaurant, an office building, forgetting to remove your topcoat, and the doorman is bound to stop you with a few admonitions about culture. The Russian masses have discovered culture, and they seem to be resolved to let one another and the world know about it.

Thus something quite typical and amusing happened to me last summer. I entered the Soviet Union through Leningrad, after two years' absence. In the evening I took a stroll with the group of Open Road tourists who were in my custody. Absorbed in conversation, I absent-mindedly pulled out my cigarette box, lit the last cigarette and most naturally, in typical New York fashion, threw the empty box into the gutter. It happened that a group of Russians, including a military man, were standing on the curb waiting for a bus. The expression I caught in their eyes was vaguely disturbing, but I was too intent on what I was saying to pay it any heed. When we were about a half a block away from the group, I felt somebody tapping on my shoulder. "Citizen!" I turned around. It was the military man. Bowing very politely, he handed me the empty box. "You lost that," he grinned. I realized my misdemeanor immediately, but I kept my bearings. "Oh, yes, thank you very much." I took the box and put it back in my pocket. The Russian smiled knowingly. My chief embarrassment, however, was before my tourists: I should have known better—"culture!"

OF course, all this I suppose is necessary. When I think of the millions of raw peasants who have been inundating the Soviet cities, of the way they push past you without apologizing, of the way they manage to befoul public lavatories, of the way they blow their noses without benefit of handkerchief. when I think of the terrible quarrels of t. peasant women in our communal kitchens, c

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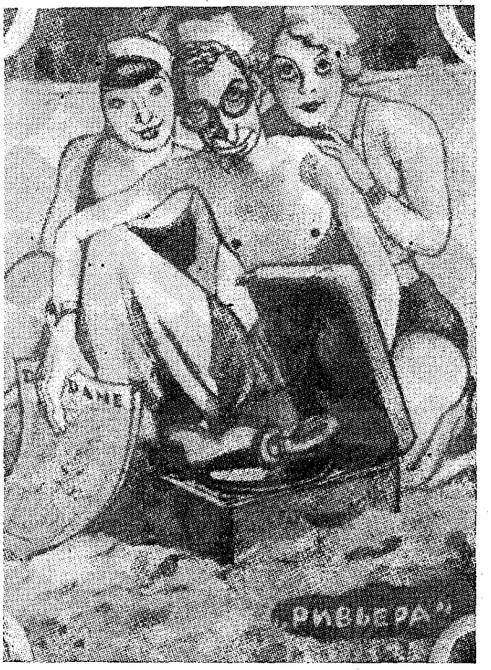
nent's recently pro- it abortions, encour- ıcrease the respon- matter of alimony, t deal of attention. ı discussed in every e farm. The Soviet ters from readers, pproving and some the projected law. ıpaganda carried on r of the law. The ts are taken from e published by the A serious discus- will appear in a W MASSES.—THE

—The creative personality does not need a family. Children, diapers. . . . Henry Byron lived alone. So did Jack Wilde. When I went from Valya to Sonia, lived with Henrietta and courted Nina, I certainly realized the full horror of family life. Not only did I lack the time for creative work, but I didn't even have the time to see Katya. The family is the corpse of love, the crematorium of wages—all in all not a business for a man of inspiration. As regards wives, they're faithless. And besides, please don't annoy me with these everyday trifles. For two years I haven't been able to work and I live only on the faith three publishers have in my talent.



—I am not against an honest, industrious family. On the contrary, until recently I myself had three families. And all three of them, as if in spite, needed support. Now I have fewer. One family married an architect, now she doesn't need my money. She even sent me some goods for a summer suit. But why all this fuss about children? I prefer grown-ups, especially blondes. Brunettes, too. No, we who are overworked in responsible jobs are not yet in a position to think of families with children. As for women, they ought to be free. Let the State pay them a salary. Why should they have to depend on a private male owner?

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the blood-curdling curses and profanities they hurl at one another, the petty nastinesses they are capable of—overturning the neighbor's teapot, throwing soap into the hated neighbor's soup, swiping something for no other purpose than to start trouble—when I think of all this, I can see the need for even a little more emphasis on "culture."

And now that I come to think of it, I must confess that I myself, on many occasions, found it necessary to indulge in a bit of "culture" propaganda.

Naturally. It's a transition period. Habits and attitudes stick with amazing tenacity. Nineteen years of revolution have accomplished wonders, but they have not removed all the ugliness of the Czarist days. In the search for new social forms and attitudes, the Soviet citizens help one another, teach one another, lecture to one another. The sophisticated stranger coming from a more or less conventionalized society views the whole thing with amusement. Not so the Soviet citizen. He is in dead earnest.

Once on entering the Moscow subway train I heard one citizen admonish another: "Don't push, please. Where do you think you are? This is not the street car."

This is to say: street cars belong to the past. In street cars egoism and bad manners are more acceptable or, at least, not incongruous. The fine, commodious Moscow subway belongs to the good Socialist present and here old street car modes of behavior cannot be tolerated.

ANOTHER episode illustrating the same thing: Moscow. Bitter cold. The car is crowded. A woman in a heavy nondescript brown fur coat elbows her way to the front of the car. Her determined advance creates something of a sensation. She leaves bunches of brown animal hair on everyone she touches. Obviously, there is something very wrong with her fur. People, half-indignant, half-titillated, begin to brush themselves. A discussion starts over the ethical and cultural aspects of this queer case. The general opinion is that the woman is sadly lacking in social consciousness and culture. The woman, on the other hand, insists that she has no other coat, that it is fiendishly cold, and that she intends to wear the coat regardless of whether they like it or not. There seems to be justice in what she says. The people are stumped. Suddenly, one old man hits upon an answer: "If you were cultured and socially conscious," he says, "you would have worn the coat with the fur inside. Why should you make other people suffer?" His comeback is crushing.

THE story that makes the biggest hit among the people in the coupé and releases a long and speculative discussion on the subject of cultural continuity is the one I read from my Moscow diary: The dining room of the Savoy Hotel. The atrociously gaudy baroque, the mirrors on walls and ceiling, the pool and fountain with goldfish, lobsters and crabs, everything here is reminiscent of the vulgar ostentation of the rich Moscow merchants of the beginning of this century.

Now the dining room is filled with out-of-town workers, factory directors, Stakhanovites, who are here on business.

At the nearest table, there are two workers—blue serge suits, collars, ties. They seem to be having a grand time, the table is loaded with food and bottles of wine. They laugh, exchange pleasantries with the waitress and keep on ordering things just to have her around.

The orchestra is playing a popular sentimental gypsy tune. When it stops, one of the fellows sends the waitress to invite the conductor to the table. The conductor accepts with alacrity. After a couple of drinks, the host says rather importantly: "What I wanted to ask you, Comrade Conductor, is why you play this kind of music?"

The conductor, a suave man, twists himself into an eagerly expectant question mark. "Why don't you play opera?" presses the worker.

"What opera would you like to hear?" bows the conductor as he rises to rejoin his men. The fellow flushes. He knits his brow, pulls at his cheek, making a great effort to think. It is clear that he cannot recall the name of any opera. The pause is becoming embarrassingly long. I catch a glimmer of malicious amusement in the old conductor's eyes. He is waiting. Finally, the worker's face lights up. Triumphantly he blurts out—"Carmen!"

And as the strains of the Carmen arias fills the room, the worker, with an expression of beatitude on his face, leans back, shuts his eyes, and beating time with his foot hums the universally familiar tune. His entire attitude seems to say: "It is not for nothing that we fought, suffered, struggled and built *piatiletkas*. . . ."

One of the tourists in the coupé comments condescendingly: "A Soviet Molière might write a play entitled *Le Prolétaire-Gentilhomme.*"

To be sure. There is something amusing about the first steps of the masses in acquiring a new and to them heretofore quite inaccessible culture. There is no doubt that this worker is just beginning to discover that he has been speaking prose all his life. But anyone understanding what is going on in the Soviet Union also knows that a few years hence the same worker will with as much or even greater pleasure hum Moussorgsky, Bach and Beethoven.

Accident?

DAVID SHREIBER

The laughter the curls
Were ground to death
Beneath the wheels of a ten ton overload
And the father weeps
    without tears
    without anger
Behind the blueness of his eyes.

In the long darknesses of these winter nights
He rages against the nameless truckman
Or the groaning overlord on the machine

But to men he is silent

And silence is no answer.

Still father,
It was no truckman killed your firstborn
    16 hours at the wheel with the night rain and the fog
        against his eyeballs
    two days working and an electric numbness gets his calf
        and his foot on the clutch
    the cold makes brittle strangers of his fingers. . . .

Father . . . listen father
Listen to me.
All around us—whipped to the limit—
Ten million cogs gone clattering mad
The truckwheel caught, knit tooth for spoke
Ground your son.

The world is on a conveyor belt
And silence is no answer,
Father.
Listen father!

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What Is "An American"?

ROCKWELL KENT

WHAT is "An American"? A number of years ago the outfit that terms itself the "Daughters of the American Revolution" set out to tell the world; and as an initial step they prepared and published a black-list—and it was a very large black-list — of those writers among our fellow citizens who were un-American. To my surprise I found my name upon the list. My only book at that time was *Wilderness*. It was the story of a year spent with my eight-year-old-son in a log cabin on an Alaskan island—a story of, to some degree, such a life as the pioneers of the American continent must have had. My name upon the list! For what? I was, and am, a bit confused.

Following the final conviction of Sacco and Vanzetti it became publicly known that I was one of those millions in America who felt that there had been a serious and deplorable miscarriage of justice. So a number of people—presumably Americans—set to writing me anonymous letters to the effect of "Why don't you go back to Russia where you came from?" That's strange: I hadn't come from Russia.

A few years ago, moved by the appeal of a number of the farmers of the Adirondack region where I live to enquire into the expenses of township and county government which were proving such a ruinous burden to the farmers in particular, I initiated an investigation of the county finances by auditors appointed by Governor Lehman. When in due time the auditors' report was published it revealed that irregularities, extravagance, and graft were the rule in the county government. The auditors recommended legal action. No action was taken; no action could be taken in Republican Essex County. The district attorney and the county officials just had a good laugh over it all—and raised a few deserving salaries. And in the political campaign that followed—oh yes, we had to put a party in the field—the henchmen of "the Ring" described me, as they slipped two-dollar bills into the voters' hands, as "a black-browed foreigner." A foreigner again! It puzzles me.

In the year of 1903 I attained my majority. At eight o'clock in the morning of the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of that year it was announced to me, in my mother's house in Tarrytown, N. Y., that a carriage awaited me at the door. There, sure enough, was one of those elegant Victoria hacks, and its respectful driver. "Are you ready, sir?" said he. "For what?" I asked. "To go to the polls," he said, "this is Election Day." I asked him who had sent the hack: "The Republican Party," said the driver. I said to him: "Go back and tell the Republican Party that I'm voting Socialist, and that I'm walking to the polls."

Now, that Socialism in which I then believed proposed a Cooperative Commonwealth as the solution of those social and economic inequalities which had even then become established, and under which there was even then much suffering. This Cooperative Commonwealth was proposed as a substitute for the prevailing system, Capitalism, which to even my young but not entirely untrained intelligence seemed to have defeated the very objects of American independence as they were proclaimed in our immortal Declaration. And let me tell you that those objects represented to many a young man of that day the keynote of America. The War of Independence: how our school books played that up! And how they stressed its glorious cause!

As boys we used to play at war, that war. How often we fought Bunker Hill with snow-balls or with sticks! No honor lay in being British. And to reveal the intensity of the patriotism with which we were fired I may tell a disgraceful anecdote about myself, aged twelve, and driving with English friends through the streets of London. There were sounds of acclamation: "Look! There goes the Prince of Wales!" said an English one of us. "Kill him!" I cried.

Prometheus — *Rockwell Kent*

They must have been good friends: I'm still alive.

Youth is an ardent time: one feels things so! I read the New Testament, and Tolstoy, and Thomas Paine, and that book that had meant so much to Thomas Jefferson: Rousseau's *Social Contract*. The gospel of the Sermon on the Mount, the terrifying conclusions of Tolstoy's "The Demands of Love," the words "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité," the great proclamatory phrases of our Declaration—these were the Truth to me, a young American. And in the poets that I read I found these Truths. I wept—youth weeps—over the concluding words of the soul-tortured and weary "Ancient Mariner:"

> Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
> To thee, thou Wedding Guest!
> He liveth well, who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast.
>
> He prayeth best, who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

"How can we face these truths in an unloving and unhappy world?" I asked myself. I saw the poor people of the world, of America, the misery of poverty, its hopelessness. I saw the barrenness of lives of common drudgery. I recalled Wordsworth, and repeated to myself: "'Have we not reason to lament what man had made of man?'" "And is this," I asked myself, "this world of Capitalism the culmination of what America was freed to realize? *Are* all men free and equal? *Are* they pursuing Life and Liberty and Happiness?" And Capitalism answered: "Wait."

Thirty-two years have passed since my first vote—and the thirty-two years past maturity are precious in the life of man. "Where," I ask of Capitalism, "are your promises? Where are the promises of our Declaration—for which men fought and died—which you confirmed? Where are the promises of Nineteen Seventeen for which two hundred thousand young Americans were killed? Is this, *Today*, your answer?" "No," says Capitalism, "Wait."

I'm waiting as I have waited, and as millions more have waited and—not much longer now—will wait. I'm waiting, with those aspirations that my American childhood brought me, still as alive today as ever in the ardor of my youth. The revolution that I then felt had to be, I know today—I've thought a lot in thirty years—*shall* be. The promises of Capitalism, the torrent of its protestations, pleadings, threats, I and increasing numbers now know more

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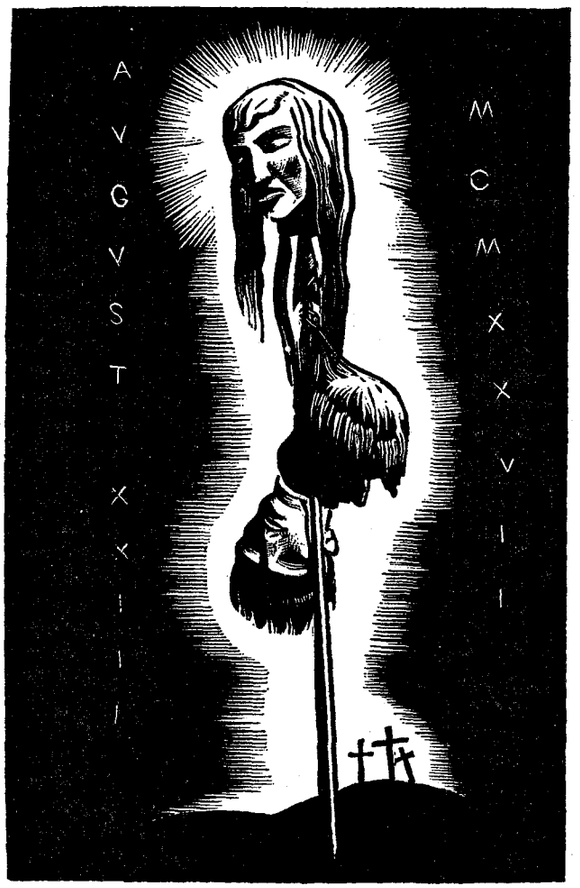

August Twenty-third *Rockwell Kent*

surely than before to be the purposeful deceits and perjurings of the vested betrayers of Americanism. We only, who know this, who still keep alive the belief of our forefathers that here in the United States there can be realized *equality of man,* are true Americans. And if believing, *wanting* that, we turn at last against that afterthought of American independence, the Constitution, we may at least, after a century and a half of experience, plead to a knowledge that those first experimentalists, the signers, may have wished they'd had, but lacked.

I have said that the ideals of my adolescent years are not forgotten: such hopes, in lots of us, live on. And in these years I've pondered, as I had before my first Election Day, on how that dream could be made real through government. I've traveled, seen things, heard people talk, discussed with them; I've used my ears and eyes; I've read. And nowhere, not in the confident assertions of my standpat friends, not in the optimism of reformers, not in the smug Times, nor blatant Tribune, not in the propaganda of the New Deal nor in the trumpetings of Fascism, not in the failures of Labor Parties, not in the action of those renegade idealists who joined the war, not in the war itself—that saved Democracy!—and not in patched-up, temporary, trembling peace, not in a thought or thing that in the thirty-two years of my maturity has penetrated through my senses to my brain—have I encountered a single reason that could destroy or modify my early firm belief. *Times* change: who'll say they don't grow worse? And Parties change. Young men grown old and senile cling to the hollow name that stood for something that they maybe were in youth. And so the good word Socialism that once denoted universal brotherhood and peace is now become the name for Hitler's government.

Yet the old cause that used to bear that name lives on. Wars and depressions have aggravated it; experience and the brains of men have perfected it; and the social revolution in Russia has brought to it new confidence, new strength, and—last, not least—the name of Communism.

And now—having, I trust, divulged my faith—I want to return to the first sentence of this article, the question: "What is an American?" For at the general practice of branding the Communists as "un-American" I must again express bewilderment. What *is* American? I have traced the origin of my present convictions to the idealism of an American youth, built up by his schooling in American history and kindled by the glowing rhetoric of the immortal Declaration of American Independence. But I have yet perhaps—even here in this melting-pot that is America—to account for my lineage to those rampant Nordic Nitwits of whom the D. A. R. is occasionally so voluble an example. Know then, for what it may be worth, that many of my ancestors were among the earliest settlers of America, and that several fought as soldiers in the War of Independence. If ancestors and blood make an "American," I'm one.

I've traced my blood, I've traced my faith: it may be well in conclusion to quote at some length that Declaration of Independence to which I have referred as containing within itself not only the most clear and incontrovertible evidence of what we in America were dedicating ourselves to in fighting for our independence, but as expressing to Americans of all time the command of our founders to continue to fight on. Here read the Declaration:

> When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.
>
> We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundations on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such a Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government.

In these paragraphs of the Declaration of American Independence is the considered statement of the Fathers of our Country that Governments are instituted to secure Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, and the solemn adjuration that it is the right and *duty* of Americans to throw off Governments that don't. Here is America epitomized; the Declaration is our flag. Then let the test of True Americanism be—not ancestry, not race nor creed, not loyalty to "Democracy" nor to the Constitution,

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nor to the Supreme Court, nor to any established institution or order—but unswerving adherence to the letter and spirit of the Declaration. That is enough.

IT is the year 1936, the hundred and sixtieth year of our independence, our hundred and forty-ninth year under a Constitution that was adopted to "establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." We look about us. Today, as for years past, over ten million citizens are without employment, unwilling objects of state charity; strikes with attendant violence are common; gangsters are rampant; Government is corrupt; courts are venal; millions of ex-soldiers once drafted for a European war are living—(though two hundred million aren't); we're counting up our millions for the next great war (for what!); taxes are oppressive; there is much poverty, much suffering. We look about and see all this. It is the fruit of the consistent progressive advance of the American experiment in Democracy. "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness"; "justice and domestic tranquillity": are these mere words?

And are what we today enjoy the "blessings of liberty"? No one, but in irony, would say yes. There are millions in America who are aware that their own lives are not happy, but who endure injustice and unhappiness without complaint: are these "Americans"? There are millions whose lives, relative to the poor, are so comfortable that they accept the status quo: are they "Americans"? There is a strong minority that, profiting from the exploitation of the rest, enjoy their privileged lives and fight for privilege and power: what are they? And there is another minority, but a growing one—citizens by law, whatever may have been their fathers' birthplace or their own, citizens whether their forbears came here on the Mayflower or the Aquitania—who have either read in the Declaration of Independence or found it in their own hearts that *all* men were created equal, that men *should* live under justice and in tranquillity, that the *general* welfare, *general* Life and Liberty and Happiness are, and should be, every man's concern; and that such rights shall be established in America: are these "Americans"? They are.

AND if they take as their philosophers and guides not the Frenchman, Rousseau, and the Briton, Locke, of Thomas Jefferson, but that more modern German, Marx, and the Russian, Lenin, it is less a reproach to their Americanism than to America itself for its own lack of leaders in the cause Americans are pledged to. To be a true American a man must have the will to right our social wrongs. *How,* is his own concern. For me, the way is Communism.

Salesman Wilson

JOSEPH MARTIN

IN 1910 when I was graduating from a New York City public school, Harry Wilson, a neighborhood friend of mine, and a year or two older than I, commiserated with me over having to go to high school instead of taking a job and working my way up in a business. Harry had quit high school after one term, and was working in the shipping room of a firm dealing in leather belts and other dress accessories. He was proud of the firm; he boasted of its rating in *Dun and Bradstreet's.*

His ambition was to become a salesman for his firm and to that end he worked hard and interested himself in the business and learned it so well that, as long as he was around, nobody had to consult inventory sheets or ledgers—he had the information on the tip of his tongue. He got his reward—the first sales route that opened up.

At that time a salesman was a figure of some consequence. His work, on the whole, was lighter than that of an inside man, though he might kick about the weight of his sample case. He felt more independent. He wasn't working under a boss's or a foreman's eye. Buyers at the time were big shots, usually the bosses themselves, and dealing with them gave the salesman a sense of importance. Moreover, he considered his "trade" a personal possession; if he changed jobs he could count on taking a large part of it over to his new connection. As a result, he felt not only more independent than other types of employes in the office and the shop; he felt more secure. He had more than the job—what almost amounted to a business of his own. From the money viewpoint also he classed fairly high up.

The assurance that a selling job with a well-rated concern gave to people was shown in the way Harry's family took the news of his advancement. Without waiting for him to turn in his first week's earnings they took out their savings, used them to move into a better neighborhood, get new furniture including what were then the standard marks of gentility: a rug and a piano.

But the picture was already beginning to change when Harry got there. The colors were not so rosy; competition was intensifying; commissions were being cut; expense accounts were being pared down. Compared with shopworkers his income was still fancy, but it was going down instead of up. In other ways the changes were for the worse. Connections were becoming less personal. Fewer and fewer bosses were doing their own buying. The selling relationship was becoming a transaction between clerks.

A few years later I attended Harry's wedding. There, talking about his plans, he told me that he expected to go into business on his own. The "trade" liked him; he knew every angle of the business. He would start small and work hard. He was confident of his success. There was no "future," he said, in selling—the first time I had heard him disparage it.

When I next met him, some years later, he was in his own business, looking haggard from overwork but still optimistic. For the moment business was good. He had just hired a shipping boy, his first employe. Up to that time he had done his own shipping, as well as his own buying, selling, bookkeeping, delivery and portering. He had no stock on hand, and had to go hunting for his goods after he had "sold" them. The process was nerve-wracking, but the glory of running his own business made up for it. To men of an earlier generation, if they were willing to work that hard, success had come almost automatically. But by Harry's time the situation had changed. Small business men were being squeezed out. The independent was, in effect, so long as he could not afford to hire workers, drastically exploiting his own labor.

Harry's elimination was tragic. He had endorsed a note for a friend which was not met; he had to make good, and it took all his cash assets. Simultaneously some of his accounts went bad, leaving him without the money he had counted on to conduct his current business. He went into bankruptcy—and into a nervous breakdown.

He had, at the time, heavy family responsibilities. He had three children, one of them delicate and needing expensive special care. His family and friends helped him. They lent him money. His old firm offered him his old job, but pride made him turn it down. He believed that the fault was with his "line"; that leather was a poverty trade and that he could do better in another line. He invested his borrowings in bakery specialties. His business career here was brief and disastrous. After that debacle he could no longer afford pride, and went back to his old job. He is earning today, with the lower value of the dollar, what he began with twenty years ago.

He is in his early forties, but is quite gray and deeply lined. He lives in a section of Brooklyn once considered high class, but now deteriorating into a slum, deteriorating like its middle-class residents, many of whom now earn less than wage-income. He has always laughed at my radicalism, and considered himself in a different category from workers. Some of the men in his place are in the outside salesmen's union. He has finally promised to come to a meeting because, as he says, he thinks he ought to be with the other boys. Significantly, his social relations are all with the "boys." He knows very few bosses personally any more.

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Our Readers' Forum

Not a Printer's Error

Permit me to call to your attention, possibly for comment, the following quotation:

"The right of revolution is the inherent right of a people to cast out their rulers, change their policy, or effect radical reforms in their system of government or institutions, by force or a general uprising, when the legal and constitutional methods of making such changes have proved inadequate, or are so obstructed as to be unavailable."

This statement of an "inherent right" is found in the text by the eminent authority, Henry Campbell Black, LL.D., "Constitutional Law," 3rd Edition, 1910, p. 10. However, in spite of the "indestructibleness" of this "right" (p. 10) we find that apparently it has disappeared by the 4th Edition, 1927, by the same author. Since this text is used in the law schools to no small extent, the policy underlying this bit of expurgation becomes significant.

A Law Student.

One Saturday Afternoon

Saturday was a beautiful day. The air was fresh and alive, which makes one feel like work, and I had work to do. Looking out the window across the square I could see the hands of Klein's clock. At four I decided to go uptown and as it was such a clear day I took my camera.

Fourteenth Street was thick with people. At the corner I took a couple of snapshots of a sad-faced old man holding a beauty-parlor sign. In the street, a man with a flag harangued a crowd. Over at the right, there were six or eight mounted policemen.

Near Ohrbach's Department Store the crowd was dense and each side of the walk was lined with police. In front of the store, there was a patrol wagon. I pushed on toward the subway when suddenly everything started to give. The police at the store entrance were making a rush for the street. Out on the car tracks I had a glimpse of a man on his knees, and a cop swinging at him with a club. The crowd across the street was booing. Then, without warning, the mounted police rode into them. If you have ever seen a reaper in a wheatfield—it was like that. Involuntarily, I raised my camera and snapped the shutter. Instantly I was grabbed from all sides and pulled and shoved in as many directions. Somehow I managed to slip my camera into my coat-pocket. I was held from behind and a policeman and a plainclothesman stood in front of me. The latter was yelling, "What the hell do you think you're doing—give me that camera." I told him the camera was in my pocket, if he wanted it, to take it. Looking very pleased, he very slowly doubled his fists, took a step back and let me have it full in the face. The two cops holding me from behind, kept me from going down. After that I gave him the camera, which he smashed on the pavement, saying "Too bad you dropped it—now get the hell out of here." As I turned I saw the man in uniform raise his club, so I ducked and got it between the shoulders. They picked up what was left of the camera and gave it to a sergeant. I went to him and asked for it. I told him the number of the camera at his request. He whispered something to a pleasant-faced patrolman who was with him, who, turning to me, said, "You've got to go to the station first." We started off down Broadway. The pleasant-faced cop seemed embarrassed and asked me how it happened. After I told him, he wanted to know if I was born in this country, and if I were a Jew. And on finding out I didn't fit in with his logic, he said:

"Now, tell me, why do you get mixed up in such things?" I asked him, in answer, if it was against the law to take pictures of brave policemen doing their duty in this free country.

"Mister," he said—"that ain't the point. The point is, it's bad taste."

Overcome by his refinement, I remained silent and he talked on—at the station, the desk sergeant made sure the films were exposed. I came home with a headache, two dozen films ruined, a smashed camera—and a vague notion that Fiorello La Guardia doesn't like to have pictures taken of his cavalry in action.

Arnold Blanche.

Macfadden, Philanthropist

You seem to forget that Macfadden's heart is with the poor. Don't you know about his one-cent restaurants? About the Macfadden "Foundation" into which he sank $5,000,000? The only thing anyone has seen of that $5,000,000 is the one-cent restaurants, now 2 cents to 17 cents. But even so he helps the poor take a cup of coffee, for instance. It's 2 cents, cheap enough unless you're an aristocrat and want cream and sugar with it, in which case you add 2 cents and 1 cent to the original 2 cents and there's your coffee. His other bargains, which it took $5,000,000 to make possible, are a tab of butter, much smaller than the usual cafeteria size, 2 cents; a roll, 2 cents; cereal, 2 cents, plus 2 cents and 1 cent for cream and sugar.

It is significant that while New York has two such places, the only other city that has them is Washington, D. C. And when you recall that one of his editorials in Liberty went on to show how much money he could save the country by feeding the unemployed cracked wheat instead of giving them work relief, the motive becomes apparent.

But the pay-off is this. It seems his wife doesn't understand him either and is suing him for a property settlement as well as a divorce. At a court hearing her lawyer made the charge that the "Foundation" was created purely and simply as a fund transference to prevent her from attaching any of the $5,000,000.

A. B. Z——

For a People's Digest

A comrade and I have an idea that we'd like you to consider. We've become fed up with Readers Digest with its many reactionary articles, reprints and lack of "left-wing" articles. We think it would be a good idea to have a sort of "left-wing" Readers Digest which would periodically reprint the best articles of the radical press.

There is certainly a need for it. How many times do we come across articles that we would like to have passed on, even in condensed form if necessary.

One suggestion for the actual organization of it would be to have an Advisory Board made up of radicals, liberals, etc., from various literary organizations. We have in mind something like the Writers Union set-up—a united front against war and fascism.

There is room for a great deal of discussion on the subject and our purpose is to start the ball rolling. For titles we suggest: Literary Survey, Magazine Digest, Synopsis, People's Digest.

New York, N. Y. N. B.

Saving Two Lives

Prince Hubertus Frederick Lowenstein was among those who today signed a cable to the Chamber of Deputies in Rio de Janeiro, by the Joint Committee for the Defense of the Brazilian People, 156 Fifth Avenue, Room 530, New York.

The cablegram protests the deportation to Germany of Arthur Ewert, former Reichstag Deputy, and his wife Elise, a writer of some note, who fled from Germany and sought refuge in Brazil after Hitler came into power.

The Ewerts were arrested in December, 1935, when a wave of terror swept Brazil, and while in jail were brutally tortured. They are now threatened with deportation to Germany which is tantamount to a death sentence. The cable urges the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies to permit Mr. and Mrs. Ewert to leave for a country of their own choosing.

The cable, signed by a long list of prominent liberals, included Roger Baldwin, Arthur Garfield Hays, Bishop McConnell, Lewis Gannet, Maxwell Stewart, Malcolm Cowley, Rose Schneiderman (Pres. Women's Trade Union League), Varian Fry, Joseph Brodsky, Walter Gellhorn, Georg Bernhard, John P. Davis (of the National Negro Congress), Lester Granger, Charles Thomson, Reverend Ralph Reed, James Waterman Wise, Winifred Chappell, John Howard Lawson, Joseph Freeman, Paul Crosbie.

Secretary of Joint Committee.

U. of Penn Accepts Us

My attention has been called to the comment on the Readers' Forum page of a recent issue of The New Masses, concerning the offer of a gift subscription to the periodical for this Library. I shall appreciate it if I may have the privilege of your columns for the following statement, which I trust will remove the misconception which seems to have been entertained concerning this Library's policy:

Like every large library, the University of Pennsylvania Library receives innumerable offers of gift subscriptions to periodicals in various fields—political, religious, or scientific. Most libraries, the University Library included, find it impossible to accept all of these offers because of the limited amount of space available, and an effort is made therefore to give precedence to those periodicals which are most frequently requested by readers.

No publication has ever been rejected by this Library because of the ideas for which it stands. The only factors involved in acceptance or rejection of a periodical offered as a gift are the apparent demand for the publication and the amount of space available. The space available for current issues of periodicals is literally so limited and overcrowded that it is always difficult to make a place for a new publication.

The same mail which carried my letter to The New Masses carried identically the same letter to another periodical, non-political in nature. Both letters were written in accordance with the policy stated above. In neither case did the ideas for which the publication stands enter into consideration.

Hitherto we have had requests for The New Masses from so few students that the interest in it did not seem great enough to justify giving it space on our crowded shelves. It may be that we were mistaken in this estimate. If, therefore, the donor wishes to renew the offer we shall be glad to accept it and to make the publication available to all who want it, as we do with publications both for and against every conceivable subject.

C. Seymour Thompson.
Librarian.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

Sectarianism on the Right

FARRELL is among the writers—Robert Cantwell, Josephine Herbst, Albert Halper, John Steinbeck, Leane Zugsmith are others—whose work has been noticeably quickened and invigorated by contact with the revolutionary movement.

Many artists have testified to the refreshment and freedom gained from association, whatever the degree of closeness, with the revolutionary movement, but have expressed it more often in the narration of personal experience than in the formulation of critical attitudes. So far Farrell has refrained from giving us any personal experience story. In his *A Note on Literary Criticism,* on the contrary, he subjects the literary critics in the revolutionary movement to a drastic critical analysis.[1]

Now a creative writer does not interrupt his work for several months to write criticism for any light reason. It means that no critic was doing what the writer felt there was an urgent necessity to do. And it can be taken for granted that Farrell does not speak merely for himself, that his book expresses reservations held by other writers and dissatisfactions and disappointments felt by other writers, but, for one reason or another, never expressed by them. Nor is it likely that Farrell would have written the book had he felt that he would be a lone voice, had he no assurance of the agreement of other writers and critics with his viewpoint. The book, therefore, apart from its own intrinsic character, is important as an indication of a new crisis in revolutionary literature.

First, however, let us consider its purely critical function. It performs some valuable services by making a detailed and documented analysis of vitiating and constricting elements in our Marxist literary criticism. It is true that his is not the first voice raised against them, that some of the very critics whom he attacks have anticipated him; Farrell's book, however, is the first fully elaborated critical attack. No previous statements are of the same order.

Though Farrell's survey of the current literary scene is incomplete, distorted, lacking in perspective and in some ways has the curious abnormality of something held too close to the eyes for focussing, nevertheless, in details, it gives us strongly accented truths.

I enumerate here some of the services Farrell's book performs—all, it will be noticed, in terms of negative criticism:

Its arraignment of anti-intellectualism on the part of some Marxist critics, a diminishing but still existing tendency, and its analysis of some of the false positions it has led to.

Its descriptions of some of the sentimentalities and pieties which have no function as literary criticism but which have taken the place of criticism with spokesmen of an extreme and evangelical form of Marxism—for example, moral exhortations whose effect would be to lead writers to consider writing inferior to organizing and other forms of action.

Its attack upon the use of the categories "bourgeois" and "proletarian," not as descriptive terms, but as standards of judgment.

Its analyses of some of the rootless outgrowths of revolutionary romanticism.

Its exposure of the uselessness of advance formulas for unwritten literature.

Its scoring of infertile speculations such as the wished-for superiority of the "collective" over the "individual" novel.

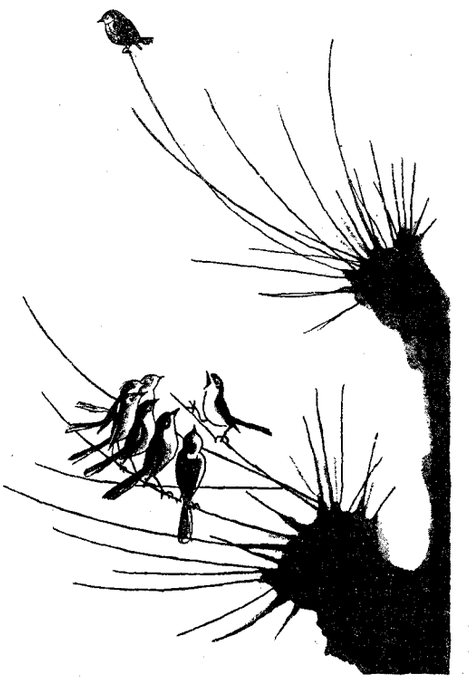
But most especially its arraignment of the too-frequently mechanical application in Marxist criticism of the materialist interpretation.

Why, then, is Farrell's book so unsatisfactory? Chiefly because, in spite of an imposing array of Marxist citations, he does not use the Marxist method. He picks Marxist criticism out of its historical setting, out of its social context; he examines it in a virtual vacuum where its life processes are suspended. He does not understand, or at least gives no evidence that he understands, why, at any particular time, Marxist criticism was extreme.

Yet it is necessary to do precisely this, to set Marxist criticism in its historical setting. For Marxist criticism arose to fill a historical need; its functions changed through the changes Marxist criticism itself set in motion. What was useful at one point became obstructive at another; what was faith later became fanaticism; what was a powerful principle at one stage became sectarianism in the next. It is the task of the critic to show when and why a certain approach becomes invalid, where its character changes. To describe the course of Marxist criticism as if it, and the field in which it operated, were static is to be undialectical. But that is how Farrell presents it, as if it arose not out of an interplay of social forces affecting literature but in the fancies of a few writers who, having become interested in politics, made a clumsy attempt to squeeze literature into the Marxist mold. To record what, looked at out of their setting, seems excesses and absurdities, has a very limited value. The thorough critic will examine it, in its time and its place and in all its relationships.

Men resort to extreme action not out of choice but necessity, though they may continue to do so beyond the occasion. Sectarianism and excess were necessary and inevitable at one stage of the revolutionary movement on the literary front. I remember that only a few years ago the presentation of the life of workers in any straightforward and uncondescending fashion, was dismissed as propaganda, and propaganda then was the literary mortal sin. Consider this significant fact: Farrell's own first book had to be issued not in its own character as fiction but in a pretentious disguise as social science! There was no preparation at the time for so objective a presentation of the life of a section of the working class. Only belligerent and sectarian advocacy of the use of such literary material could astound people into considering it at all. I have no doubt that in individual cases this did some harm; but if it did not answer historic necessity, would literature today have such a general Left direction?

If we see so-called sectarianism in its historic context, we see that it performed essential services, in the light of which its shortcomings are insignificant. First, it called attention to the class basis of literature. This may now seem a platitude, but only in the sense in which every revolutionary idea becomes a



L. Soifertis

Nightingale: Mother, why has that sparrow been chirping itself hoarse for three days?
Motherbird: "The poor fellow is trying to sing 'O Susanna' with words by Gertrude Stein."

[1] *A Note On Literary Criticism*, by James T. Farrell. Vanguard. $2.50.

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platitude after its triumph. We do not minimize Columbus because anybody who can pay the fare can now get to America. Secondly, the so-called "sectarians" fought for the right of the working class to appear in literature in its true terms, rejecting the then established notion that working-class experience was not in its own terms a fit subject for literature. Thirdly, it was because the vast majority of American writers ignored the capitalist nature of contemporary society and its class basis, that these prejudices existed.

The fact is that revolutionary criticism in this country first came, long ago, with the humble petition that literature about the working class be accorded a status of equality with literature about other classes—that the proletarian be given the mere status of citizenship in the republic of letters. This was the whole tenor of Michael Gold's "Toward a Proletarian Literature," which was published in 1921.

There were then achievements to put to the credit of so-called "sectarianism." Now let us try to understand why sectarianism developed.

We must bear in mind that the American post-war intelligentsia, disillusioned and disheartened by the Versailles Treaty and subsequently by a misunderstanding of the N.E.P. in Russia, lost interest in social questions, and actually turned upon proletarian literature and Marxist criticism, attacking it as crude propaganda. As a consequence the remaining handful of writers who survived the cynicism and pessimism of the twenties, cast out from the main stream of American letters, concentrated upon propagating the Marxist viewpoint. They and those who subsequently joined them, were as much aware of "literary and human" values as anybody.

It must be remembered that both Joseph Freeman and Michael Gold entered the revolutionary movement as lyric poets and Granville Hicks first won his reputation as an esthetic critic. If men of this type emphasized the class basis of literature it was because that crucial factor was ignored or denied. Another important factor is that, until very recently, the Marxist classics were not available in translation. The American left-wing writer who saw the world from the revolutionary viewpoint had none of the benefits of Marx's, Engels' and Lenin's comments on culture. They had to work out everything for themselves and had to do it in a hostile environment. Historically considered, therefore, the wonder is not over errors committed but the truths arrived at under such conditions.

These are the main reasons why sectarianism developed if by sectarianism we mean an over-emphasis upon social as against the "literary and human" aspects of literature. However, if Farrell had analyzed as a Marxist, instead of merely making points in a supposed debate, he would have taken more care to point out that in the most sectarian days of the sectarian period there was never lacking a corrective tendency.

Farrell ignores other contributions of Marxist criticism in America, its studies of the subtler social interrelations of culture, of the factors making for degeneration of taste in the capitalist apparatus for the production and distribution of cultural commodities. These are not extrinsic to literature; they determine, in the long run, the psychology of the artist and the audience. And while they might be of merely academic interest in a static period, in a period of crisis and rapid change, like our own, they are of vital importance. The failure to give them adequate consideration makes James T. Farrell's book thin.

Throughout the book one looks in vain for those qualities which would give the treatment some proportion and substance. Farrell rarely uses the term *Marxist criticism* without a spoiling adjective. *Mechanical* appears most frequently; the phrase *empty of content* also is frequently used, along with *banal* and *platitudinous*. Although he does not say it outright one can only conclude that he rejects Marxist criticism. It is significant that the title of his book omits the word *Marxist* though the whole of the book is an attack on Marxist criticism; that in his attempts to set down what he *approves* of in criticism he carefully *leaves out the word Marxism*. The one conclusion we can come to, therefore, is that this Marxist rejects Marxism in literary criticism, that he denies it any validity, that he is, in effect, fighting to keep literature safe from Marxism.

The bias disclosed by Farrell's use of adjectives is paralleled by his casuistically adroit misunderstanding. For example, among other things, he elaborates upon a phrase of Malcolm Cowley's that art makes life "more than life." It is not hard to understand what Cowley meant. In the sense that Othello exceeds the normal, tragic figure of a man haunted by jealousy and King Lear exceeds the normal figure of a betrayed father, we have life magnified with deliberate intent. But Farrell carefully misunderstands this meaning. That the misunderstanding is deliberate is confessed in a later paragraph. "Mr. Cowley might contend that he does not mean these precise interpretations of his statements. All that I can reply is that, as has often been said, the road to hell is paved with good intentions." Mr. Farrell, we can see, is determinedly innocent of good intentions.

Furthermore he dismisses obviously useful Marxist forms of analysis as platitudinous, as something generally agreed upon. To assume such an agreement is absurd. The Marxist viewpoint has not won such a sweeping victory. In one instance that he selects, the Marxist review was the only one, in several hundred, to show how social circumstance was reflected in the book and how it determined the author's description of workers. No other approach would have made it clear. Far from being platitudinous, it is an example of how Marxist criticism serves as a new tool which enlarges the area of critical observation.

THE real issue Farrell raises is whether there is any function for Marxist criticism. As he presents it in this book, it has presumably an almost complete record of failure. It intrudes extra-literary values into literary criticism; its explanations of the effects of social organization and disorganization upon literature are platitudinous, maladroit or irrelevant; it has formulated no principles valid as literary judgments; those that it has formulated are crude and do more to confuse than to enlighten the reader; it misinterprets the classics by assessing them in terms that do not apply to them; it does not allow for the continuity of tradition and the persistence of certain values unaffected by social changes; it oversimplifies criticism by reducing it to virtually automatic responses to slogans; it makes individualism a crime and discourages individuality; it would subordinate literature as a category of human activity and value it, not for itself, but as a propaganda tool; it throws the stigma of decay upon that literature, however powerful it may be, that deals with the life of a civilization in decay. This is Farrell's presentation, in outline, of Marxist criticism. What else can be concluded from it but that Marxist criticism in America has failed, and

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should quickly be put away and forgotten?

However, by the terms of his opening definition, Farrell lays the basis for the Marxist criticism that he rejects. He writes: "I think that literature must be viewed both as a branch of the fine arts and as *an instrument of social influence.*" Marxist criticism specifically deals with literature as an instrument of social influence as well as with other social relationships of literature. And before the general advocacy of Marxist criticism we had *sociological criticism* which, however, lacked the sharpness and scientific decision of Marxist criticism because it ignored the class basis of literature.

Farrell reiterates that Marxist criticism denies and imperils the values of individuality. Into this unjustified assumption creep other equally unjustified assumptions. One is that group responses cannot be as subtle, or do not require as subtle an understanding or are not as interesting as individual responses. Again, speaking of the "collective" novel, he writes: "Also I think that this type of novel is frequently written because novelists cannot sustain the development of an individual character and hold the reader's interest over a span of three, four or five hundred pages." It might, with equal fairness, be said that the writer of a novel centered around a main character, chooses this form because he is incapable of managing more than one character.

In every section of Farrell's book such extremism appears and invalidates the services which it could have performed. Despite his apparatus of quotations from Marxist classics, all in one tone, and obviously chosen for his purposes like the citations in a lawyer's brief, Farrell forgets that Marxism is not solely scorn of sectarianism; scorn of sectarianism is only an incidental of Marxism.

Farrell's book of course has its own historical context as I have intimated in previous paragraphs. The general adoption in the revolutionary movement of a united-front program has led to reconsiderations of literary policy and revisions and revaluations of critical attitudes. There has been a recoil from narrow and sectarian applications of Marxist theory in literature. There will be, inevitably, extremism in this direction as there was in the other; Farrell's book is an example of it. To accept his analysis would be to abandon Marxism altogether, to deny the achievements of Marxist literature and criticism, to lay aside good new instruments for extending the range of critical analysis, and to fail in our function of influencing our contemporaries. Dimitrov, in his analysis of the general program for the united front, warned against the political dangers of the swing to the right, of the dissolution of revolutionary principles. The appearance of Farrell's book indicates that the danger also exists in the literary field. Certainly, the fact that the Catholic Book Club recommends *A Note On Literary Criticism* illuminates the nature of its Marxism.

ISIDOR SCHNEIDER.

Imperialism at Battle Stations

A PLACE IN THE SUN, by Grover Clark. Macmillan Co. $2.50.
THE BALANCE SHEETS OF IMPERIALISM, by Grover Clark. Columbia University Press. $2.75.
WAR IN THE PACIFIC, by Sutherland Denlinger and Charles B. Gary. Robert McBride & Co. $3.

"IN 1852," wrote Lenin in his work *Imperialism, the Final Stage of Capitalism,* "Disraeli, a stateman generally inclined toward imperialism, declared: 'The colonies are millstones round our necks.' But by the end of the nineteenth century, the heroes of the hour were Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain, the open advocates of imperialism and the most cynical exponents of imperialist policy."

This quotation sets the question which only Leninism answers. And the writer would ask that, before reading these three recently published books, the prospective reader of these books first look into Lenin. Otherwise, they will lead him into a bog of confusion.

This is the one similarity of the two authors (Clark and Denlinger). Otherwise, they are miles apart, and their works deal with completely distinct aspects of imperialism and in widely varying manner. Grover Clark, a remnant of Disraelism of 1852, has not the slightest idea of what imperialism is, yet ventures boldly to discuss it in two volumes of profound nonsense, and it is he upon whom logic must concentrate its fire.

Only one who has the temerity to evaluate the rulers of the earth as drivelling idiots, could begin his book, as Grover Clark does *A Place in the Sun,* by saying:—"This book is the result of an attempt to get, from the actual records, an answer to the question: Do colonies pay? Most emphatically, the answer is: No."

Do colonies pay *whom?*. Ah, for *that* question, Mr. Clark has no answer. And to obscure facts, Clark presents us selected statistics that have no bearing upon whether or not imperialism pays *the imperialists and nobody else.* That is the real question.

It follows that, as a piece of pacifist obscurantism, serving to cover the crimes of imperialism with an apologetic "The man is mad," the Clark book *The Balance Sheets of Imperialism,"* a wearisome compendium of charts and tables of figures on imports and exports, quite appropriately is published by the Carnegie Foundation, made possible by Andrew Carnegie, the seller of defective armor plate at high prices for imperialist navies.

Clark takes up the question, eclectically arrived at: "Does imperialism pay?" on three mooted presumptions: that colonies afford an outlet for "over-population"; that possession of colonies insures increased trade; and that control over colonies gives access to raw materials not otherwise available, bringing profits in peace and security in war.

Of course, starting off as he does with not the slightest idea that class relations within the imperialist countries have anything to do with imperialism, with not the faintest notion that modern imperialism is *monopoly capitalism of, by and for finance capital,* and that the essence of imperialist aggression, intervention and control is not limited to invasion of troops, political sovereignty and domination by armed force, Clark is bound to give us conclusions that have no relation to what imperialism is and does, let alone as to whether it pays, and *whom* it pays.

Only prattling infants believe any more that imperialist seizures of territory are carried out really to afford an "outlet for overpopulation." That is merely an excuse for the imperialists, a piece of propaganda to get support of the miserable and poor in the home country of imperialism, under the delusion that their miseries are chargeable to "not enough land," rather than to capitalist or feudal exploitation or a combination of the two.

That Clark spent much effort to dissipate this fairy tale of "getting an outlet" for "surplus" people, is one point in his favor. He tried particularly hard to use Japan as a horrible example. Unfortunately, he bent all efforts in showing the one fact that very few Japanese leave Japan and go to colonial territory after Japan seizes it. And only in passing, and in a most confused presentation, does he give us an inkling of the fact that Japan actually has no genuine problem of "over-population," as shown by the problem of rice.

It is a persistent notion, spread in and out of season by all manner of commentators, that Japan needs "more land to grow rice," rice the staple food, aside from fish that comes from the boundless sea, of the Japanese people. Clark, by chance, remarks that because of the seizure of Korean land and the growing of rice in Korea by big Japanese capitalists, "the price of rice in Japan has been so low for years that the Japanese government has felt obliged to sink millions of yen in rice purchases in an unsuccessful attempt to keep prices up."

Why couldn't the man say plainly that there is a "rice surplus" in Japan now and for years past? That crop limitation and dumping rice in the sea have been discussed to get rid of this "surplus"? And that this fact knocks into a cocked hat the fairy tale that Japan "needs more land" to grow rice for her "increasing population"?

And why not also point out that the remnants of feudal land relations in Japan make it impossible for a large percentage of the Japanese peasantry to eat the rice it raises, because finance capital through village usury, and feudal landownership through rent, take every grain of rice raised?

And that, through monopoly of rice marketing it keeps the price to the city poor up so that they, too, are starving for rice; mean-

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while rice imports from colonial Korea flood the market, imports of rice grown by Koreans too miserably paid to eat the rice they, also, raise—so they subsist on the cheaper millet?

But to ask anything so simple from Clark as to explain that the *imperialists* of Japan, the Mitsuis and Mitsubishis, get fat, precisely because the peasantry and workers of *both* Japan and Korea get ever poorer, is to expect too much from one who knows nothing at all about imperialism, though he writes two books about it.

Because Clark doesn't see imperialism unless it is wearing tin helmets and functions through armed invasion and force, American imperialism gets away almost scot free in his alleged "indictment" of imperialist "sanity" in *A Place in the Sun.* There is not the least comprehension that, for example, to take one or two instances cited by Lenin, both Portugal and Argentina are as much dominated by British imperialism as if they lived under the Union Jack.

"Political control" is, to Clark, existent only when troops seize the country desired as a colony. Aggression and intervention by finance capital is utterly beyond him, or rather is okayed as something quite all right as a means of getting trade. He gives American investments in Latin America a tacit approval because, apparently, it allows the Latin Americans to fly their own flags.

Nothing is mentioned that this brings starvation and plenty of oppression to the peoples of Latin America (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil, etc.); nor that this financial imperialism wins these markets with investments which are profits wrung from the sweat and unpaid labor of workers in Pittsburgh, San Francisco and New York. No matter how "good" the Good Neighbor might be, he remains a pitiless exploiter both at home and abroad.

In the matter of trade, it is clear enough that "imperialism doesn't pay," says Clark. He takes Japanese imperialism to prove it. From 1894 to 1934, he shows that the costs of armed conquest of colonies by Japan and costs of holding them, have cost "Japan"—the nation "as a whole"—some 5,239 million yen, while the most possible profit made on trade with the colonies grabbed by force could be only some 933 million yen "or less than one-fifth of the costs of the colonies to the tax-payers."

And so what? we may ask. But Clark leaves us there. No explanation that the 5,239 million yen was the cost to the government of Japan, which borrowed, on paper, that much from Mitsui and Mitsubishi, the banking barons, who bought government bonds at a discount but get interest on them, principal and interest *both paid by the poor people.*

No explanation that the government used this money to buy munitions and a hundred other war supplies from—Mitsui and Mitsubishi, at scandalous profits. No explanation that every yen of cost to the Japanese government meant more starvation to Japanese workers and peasants, but a big profit to Mitsui and Mitsubishi. And that the 933 million yen of profit on trade, is that much more velvet for—none other than Mitsui and Mitsubishi! Nothing to show that, if it were American imperialism, it would be Morgan and Rockefeller, instead of Mitsui and Mitsubishi.

In short, Clark's whole effort to prove that "imperialism doesn't pay" is ample proof that it *does* pay the imperialists, *only* the imperialists; and that both the toiling masses of the imperialist country and the oppressed people of the colonial or subjected country are equally victims of the robbery. It is this fact that should be driven home to the workers and poor people generally of imperialist America, to show them that they are just as much victims of imperialist banditry as are Cuban peasants, Brazilian longshoremen or Mexican miners. But it needs someone besides Grover Clark to do that.

Denlinger takes up, in a way, where Clark leaves off, but only in a way of showing to what the clash of imperialisms for colonies and domination is leading. Namely, *War in the Pacific* correctly traces the main outlines of conflict—but like Clark's book cannot explain what it is all about, nor can he propose how it might be otherwise.

Yet Denlinger writes a most interesting book, superb in dramatic presentation of what he (and his collaborator, Charles B. Gary, Lieutenant Commander, U.S.S.R.) holds as the inevitable war between Japan and the United States. Here is a human book at least, and in spots of almost touching exaltation.

Here is the call to the "mill hand from Fall River" and the "Japanese peasant in the shadow of Fujiyama" to awake to the meaning of imperialism before they are thrust behind guns to shoot and stab and kill each other. Here the rather despairing analysis that we shall always have wars is modified by saying "under a society erected upon some sturdier foundation than the appetite for profit," we may abolish the causes of war.

In short, compared with Grover Clark, Mr. Denlinger is of adult intelligence and abounding genius. It is sad that he knows so little about imperialism that he has to use his genius mainly in describing, in breath-taking word pictures, that "inevitable hour" when the battle fleets of Japan and America clash in the cold seas of the North Pacific. But he does that beautifully, and it is a real education in naval techinque.

But, not knowing much about imperialism, he indulges in rather fanciful speculation on the "alliance" between imperialist America and the Soviet Union in the war with Japan. It is an idea to play with for him, and does not detract much from the book as a most valuable dramatization of the feverish rush to arm now sweeping the imperialist world.

It is this phase of Denlinger's book, its alarm to the indifferent and unwary, that makes it of value. The fleets are really steaming out there in the North Pacific! Imperialism is, in deadly earnest, calling out "All Hands to Battle Stations!"

HARRISON GEORGE.

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"Black Skin Coverin' Po' Workin' Man"

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ALONG abo... the summer of 1930 when the mo... thly NEW MASSES began publishing selected texts from Lawrence Gellert's collection *Negro Songs of Protest* I was told by a prominent choir leader that ". . . these songs are not important: they do not express the loftier-religious feeling for which the Negro spirituals are famous. . . ." This conversation took place at just about the time when intellectual Harlem slumming was reaching its peak. For a number of years prior to the 1929 crash "intellectuals" were trekking up to Harlem where, along with generous quantities of prohibition alcohol, moderate doses of Negro "culture" were imbibed. This was the time when Negro "anthologies" in de luxe editions were published. The books graced the book shelves of most "cultured" people. Negro "culture" was the thing.

Already at that time quite a number of honest intellectuals resented this solicitude for Negro culture. They felt that, in the words of Langston Hughes, ". . . . not all Negroes are shouting spirituals, cheering endowed football teams, dancing to the blues or mouthing inter-racial oratory—supposedly unruffled by the economic stress of those days. . . ." In reality the Negro was not ". . . happy and contented . . ." as Lawrence Gellert was told on his first visit South. The Negro who spent most of his time not at revival meetings, but under chain-gang conditions had a great deal to protest against. The songs in this collection, it is true, do not express the "loftier-religious feelings," but sound an indictment against conditions which perpetrated the slander that a nation of thirteen million people, reduced to peonage, is nothing more than a grand minstrel show—and if those thirteen million people dare to be so "uppity" as to try to do something about this state of affairs, they are immediately labelled as "bad Niggers" with all the consequences of lynch justice.

The book under review contains twenty-four out of some three hundred songs collected by Lawrence Gellert in the states of Georgia, the Carolinas, Mississippi and Louisiana. These songs were sung ". . . in city slums, on isolated farms out in the sticks, on chain gangs, lumber and turpentine camps. . . ."

What are the themes of these songs? Here are some titles: "Preacher's Belly," "How Long Brethren," "Work All de Summer," "Lice In Jail," "Pickin' Off De Cotton," "'Cause I'm a Nigger," "Scottsboro" and many others. These are real songs. To quote again Langston Hughes ". . . some of them are tired of being poor and picturesque and hungry. . . ." Indeed the supposed docility of the Negro vanishes when in the song "Sistren and Brethren," the protest against lynching (". . . dey kill fo' de crime tryin' to keep what was his all de time. . . .") concludes with: ". . . Stand on yo' feet, Club gripped 'tween yo' hands. Spill dere blood too, show 'em yo's is a man's. . . ." What of the alleged contentedness of the spirituals-shouting Negroes? Here are a few telling lines from "Preacher's Belly": ". . . Religion is somethin' fo' de soul, but preacher's belly done git it all . . . Lawd make preacher big an' fat, Sleek an' shiny lak a beaver hat. . . . He eat yo' dinner an' take yo' lamb, gwine give you pay in de promis' lan'. . . . Two prayin' Niggers ninety-nine years in jail, Waitin' for Jesus to pay dere bail. Dat's a fac'. . . ."

John L. Spivak in his "Georgia Nigger" described the methods used in shanghaiing Negroes onto the chain gangs; in "Standin' on De Corner" these methods are given in graphic detail: ". . .Standin' on de corner, weren't doin' no hahm, Up come a 'liceman an' grab me by de ahm. . . . Judge he call me up an' ast mah name. . . .He wink at 'liceman, 'liceman wink too. . . . Judge he say, "Nigger, you got some work to do" . . . Workin' on de ol' road bank, shackle boun'. . . ." Surely, the victim of the vicious slave system has no illusions about the way class justice works, for in "Scottsboro" he exclaims: ". . . Judge an' jury all in de stan.' Lawd, biggoty name o' same lynchin' ban. . . . Seven nappy heads wit' shiny eye all boun' in jail an' framed to die. . . ." And the Negro knows that his worst crime is " . . black skin coverin' po' workin' man."

So much for the texts, which for the first time publicly expose the slander of the "contented darky." For these words were created by the Negro folk and are above suspicion. What of the tunes? The book contains some of the finest examples in Negro folk music. You'll have to hear them sung: you'll sing them. As in the best folk songs the world over the tune and the text are of the same cloth. Both were created at the same time. The accents and inflections are natural; nothing is labored. And American composers, especially those of the left, can learn a valuable lesson. For this is intelligible music—it is appealing without being "spiritual." These songs should be studied by composers.

Elie Siegmeister's very interesting piano accompaniments should be only one of the many ways of treating this new-found treasure of song. There should be other—more simple—versions available with guitar or banjo accompaniments added.

For seven years Lawrence Gellert sought a publisher and met with constant refusals. The reasons given were many, but boiled down to essentials they amounted to the following: the general public, through the means of the radio, phonograph, cinema, theater, anthologies and vaudeville has been taught an Amos 'n Andy and a Tin Pan Alley conception of Negro music. The American Music League in issuing this book has performed a magnificent service.

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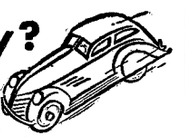

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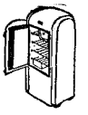

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Music

Music Manifesto

ON December 7, 1935, Hanns Eisler made a short speech. It was part of a symposium called "Music in the Crisis," given at Town Hall. Others spoke, performed: Copland, Cowell, Oscar Thompson, Mordecai Bauman, the New Singers. When Eisler had finished it became suddenly clear to composers and musicians in the audience that here was a way for music in the present social conflict; an authentic, exciting, possibly complete plan projected. The translation was inadequate; speeches anyway are worrying, they give off impressions of trickiness and brilliance, one hopes the real words are real facts but one isn't secure. The speech has now been issued[1] as the first of a series to be brought out by the Downtown Music School, where Eisler is a faculty-member. It is a neat, handsome pamphlet; the translation is excellent. And it turns out that the words are facts.

One might have known it. For there are Eisler's other facts: the two masterworks "Massnahme" and "Mother;" the polyphonic choruses "Ueber das Toeten," "Auf den Strassen zu Singen," "Liturgie vom Hauch;" the mass-songs "Forward" and "Rise Up;" the film *Kuhle Wampe*. Eisler is first a composer; it is good to remember that his formulation, his theories grow out of, have roots in, music. They are your true "esthetic," articulated out of the thing, possessed and actual, not cooked-up, not arbitrary, not nursed along to induce the thing, and make it happen. Schoenberg once said of the typical theorizer, that "nobody watches more closely over his property than the man who knows that, strictly speaking, it does not belong to him." Eisler's property is his own; he shares it with the working class of the world.

For Eisler is more than a composer. Rather, he is the new kind of composer, whose job carries him to the meeting-hall, the street, the mill, the prison, the schoolroom and the dock. Concert-hall, opera-house, theater are still in the picture; but the artist is not only artist but worker, his responsibility to all workers shows itself in all his work. Eisler is a Marxist. Other composers have been, are, Marxists; Eisler is possibly the first instance of the real fusion of Marxist and musician. His work in pre-Hitler Germany and in the post-Hitler outside world has been a wedding of music and dialectics; he is a leader as Gorky is a leader; he has experienced deeply the life and problems of the working class, his thought propels him to music and to action. Sometimes the action is the organizing of a music-front; sometimes it is the formation of a class of young composers; sometimes it is the music itself, or the teaching of socialism, through the clear, light, wiry structure of the *Lehrstuck*, which he created with Brecht.

Now for the pamphlet. After an introduction there are ten "theses;" each exposes a proposition tersely, with no extensions or elaborations; each opens up a light. First, the existing state of music:

> undoubtedly produced as a luxury. When misery increases in such proportions as today, this luxury takes on the character of provocation.

What else can we think of Stravinsky's "Apollon Musagète" ballet, with its suave, dry, elegant maneuvers, its French-court nymphs and gods, its heavy sheen of strings, its sleek loveliness (for the music is really lovely, really beautiful, if it could be cut off from the whole picture)? What else can we think of Markevich's "Psaume" or Hindemith's "Marienleben" or Roger Sessions' "Choral Preludes?" Or of chamber-music concerts, or platinum-studded operas and opera-balls, or hothouse virtuoso conservatories?

Then the situation of composers; ivory-tower, wish-fulfillment artists, "dealers in narcotics" against their will or without their knowledge. This is a hard nut for composers to crack; we have for so long dwelt in the high reaches of "art" atmosphere, believing patrons and entrepreneurs, that we are the anointed and the insulated, that it isn't nice to realize we are the tool of a vicious economic setup. The unconscious (sometimes not so unconscious) prostitution of composers in today's world is one of the sorry sights to see. It inheres all along the line, from the most successful to the never-heard; even when we starve, we think of it as a poetic "upper-class" starvation, quite different from the starvation of the ordinary unemployed worker. It is about time we discovered where our allegiance lies.

Thesis V begins the positive aspect; the situation creates organizations "among the most advanced sections of the proletariat" devoted to the participation of music in the "struggle for the radical change of the capitalist order of society;" for "the crisis in music can only be overcome insofar as music itself takes part in the liquidation of the worldwide social crisis." There is a deep-seated reluctance in musicians to change their ways; something in the special training music requires seems to engender a defensive, aggressive, reactionary attitude. The insurgents of "modern music," with their innovations in technical craft, found that out; now that the very purpose of music is in question, the resistance is even greater. But here is where even left-wing musicians have faltered or faced a blank, saying, "Yes, but how?" Here is where Eisler presents the plan. Thesis VII is a double column, headed "For the Old Purpose" and "For the New Purpose." Then a list: medium, idiom, style, forms, are covered. For the old purpose, "predominance of Instrumental Music;" for the new, "predominance of Vocal Music." This idea is already predicated in the recent history of music, when the epochal instrumental forms of the Fugue and the Sonata were succeeded by the Wagnerian Music-Drama, a composite vocal-and-instrumental music. "The trend no more means the death of instrumental music, than the growth of the orchestra meant the death of chamber-music." Some other samples: on the left side, "*Songs:* performed by a specialist in the concert hall before passive listeners. Subjective-emotional in mood;" on the right, "*Mass Song, Song of Struggle:* Sung by the masses themselves on the streets, in the work shop, or at meetings. Activizing." It is probably more accurate to speak of the Mass Song as a new short form, not necessarily replacing the concert-song, for which there is still a big field; Eisler's "In Praise of Learning" and Siegmeister's "Strange Funeral" are cases in point. The ballad, the new Opera and Operetta, the *Lehrstuck* differ from the old Ballad, old Opera and Operetta, and the Oratorio by the social criticism of the texts, and, in the music, a destruction of conventional effects and an interspersing of ironic comment and quotation. This does not imply an exclusive dependence on satirical music; the whole of *Mother* is "straight," a positive expression of a philosophy; nor is it heavy, nor effusive, nor always loud and fast.

The list goes on. ("*The Composer:* as a personality. Individual Style;" and then, "*The Composer:* as a specialist, mastering several styles of composing.") The pamphlet is perhaps too short, too cryptic, like an outline of the volume the subject demands. It is also possible that one may disagree with or want to modify this or that point. In a sense it is personal, although for a composer of Eisler's originality I find it amazingly objective. It is not all his invention; some of it has been known, tested in the Soviet Union; some of it (theater-music, for example, as an "independent element, as a musical commentary") is the product of contemporary musical thinking, stemming from Stravinsky, the Six, and others. But the correlation, the impetus, the direction are Eisler's. He has presented a method, a scaffolding and framework any world-minded composer can adapt to his needs; more, it is *the* plan he must in some way follow. When Eisler finally says: "To the criteria of 'Invention,' 'Technical Skill,' 'Emotion,' the decisive criterion of the 'Social Function' must be added," it is plain no idle or rhetorical thing is being uttered; in the phrase the whole conception is summed up. I don't want to mince words; I think that this little essay is very possibly the manifesto for the revolutionary music of our time.

MARC BLITZSTEIN.

[1] *The Crisis in Music.* Hanns Eisler. Published by the Downtown Music School, 214 E. 15th St., N. Y. C. Price, 10 cents.

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The Theater

Beginning of a Tradition

T cheers and curtain calls that fol-
were the premiere of *Battle Hymn*
thusi: he mere excesses of first-night en-
peopl Two days later more than 7,000
audie bought advance tickets, and the
tional esponse ever since has been excep-
dram bviously there is public hunger for
and h ions of our revolutionary tradition,
it as er varied may be our judgments of
Thea na, *Battle Hymn* (Experimental
event as securely registered itself as an
such e theater. Few writers of future
by its ical plays will be quite unaffected
have l ies and lacks; and audiences will
work given, to a degree at least, a frame-
attem ture reference. Such a pioneering
playw ses a complex of problems for the
explor a book-long essay is needed to
sugges But some questions immediately
may h mselves to the spectator, and it
of the rth while to discuss them in view
in em mous possibilities of this tradition

Loc ply enough into any subject and
you v eventually find a substream of
poetry rding to many readers and writers.
Is a eam of drama similarly accessi-
ble? he surface much primary material
in the utionary tradition would seem im-
possibl ransmute into living theater; and
this ap tly is confirmed by the absence of
satisfa plays about Washington, Lincoln
—and son. None of these characters is
dramati interesting as an individual, and
no clearer example of this could be wanted than John Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln,* which was generously praised a dozen years ago. Lifted out of the crucial context of his age, Lincoln emerges in the man-against-the-sky manner, a silhouette of solitary tragedy. It is a skilful dramatic pageant and a dead play; but it usefully epitomizes the sterile approach. Drinkwater looked into the Lincoln subject but stopped long before he had sighted the dramatic substream. The result is a character detached from the very masses he articulated, from the living force which carried him through the conflicts of history. Beholding the final man clothed in the garments of his time, Drinkwater was dazzled and he described the vision without bothering to understand its components. The result is a remote character-portrait irrelevant in its illusory timelessness; neither psychologically explored nor memorably described from the outside. It differs acutely from the approach of Michael Gold and Michael Blankfort, whose emphasis on the social background of John Brown makes their subject practically contemporary.

In our review of a few weeks ago we briefly described the device whereby *Battle Hymn* is linked to the America of 1936. A prolog to each act and an epilog emphasize the general political situation of the John Brown period in a manner that has double effectiveness: the events contained in the three acts are situated in their socio-economic context and the major political issues of the 1850s-1860s are found sharply contemporaneous. This double timeliness stressed by the scenes adds enormously to the excitement of the play, but it is equally clear that such correspondence between two political periods will rarely be found. Ten years ago, for instance, the allusions to the Supreme Court, now so pertinent, would have been pointless to the then contemporary events—pointlessness beyond the playwrights' control. Judged intrinsically as drama, therefore, correspondence between political issues in a play and in its season of production is adventitious. But the fact about *Battle Hymn's* method which can be generalized relates to its deliberate means of impressing audiences with the significance of the central struggles—through an innovation in form. The action proceeds on two planes: the prologs and epilog which create the general background, the acts which present the particular struggle. Though they are parallel lines as they appear on the stage, the two planes of action meet and fuse in the consciousness of the spectator. Hence, what might appear to be a superimposed background becomes an organic part of a dynamic whole. The question of one or varied technics for the two planes is a subordinate one, though the expressionist prologs of *Battle Hymn* provided refreshing contrast to the conventional technic of the acts themselves.

John Brown's career offers a superb opportunity for playwrights; here is an inspiring individual traveling from trustful passivity to impassioned action. The bare record is dramatic, in this respect apparently "easier" than Lincoln's or Washington's; and the original script of *Battle Hymn* in one instance was infinitely more effective than the current production. The final act was staged in the arsenal at Harper's Ferry which Brown and his men seized and were now defending. The quintessence of Brown's life is visible in this last desperate move to found a free Negro republic, in the hopelessness of his last stand and his final seizure. All this has been changed in the revision. The last act takes place before the final battle and there is only an epilog to bring one to the subsequent events—Brown's trial and hanging. The spectator has to supply the most dramatic episode in the play.

The purposes behind this costly revision are especially puzzling because it breaks the method of construction: a pageant of key episodes externally observed. By substituting for the original battle-scene a struggle of minds on the brink of action, *Battle Hymn* commits itself suddenly to an exploration of inner conflicts which it has hitherto avoided. Except for this inexplicable shift, Brown is consistently externalized. He is a firm spirit caught in his own inner thoughts—a picturesque figure, a provocative suggestion which risks tiring spectators who wish eventually to be let in on his secret. The question here is not alternatives of internal or external presentation—a character observed through action or through a subtle unburdening of his psyche. Both approaches offer opportunities; and once the playwright has chosen between them, he faces a sharper problem. Shall it be an orthodox dramatization of historical facts or an idealized product of wishes? No sensible playwright, of course, consciously chooses to create either an artificially-respired effigy or a fuzzy fictive chromo. He knows he

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must strike a course safely between if he is to make a picture both compelling and truthful. *Battle Hymn* leans toward timidness in this respect; what Brown gains in restraint he loses in fullness.

The result is a somewhat lean characterization requiring a background of rich stuff—which the authors and direction have supplied. Color and warmth flow through many scenes and summarize the mood in terms of the theater—sets, costumes, dances, significant phrases and gestures. These, if you will, are the poetry in the play; they even humanize the magisterial figure of Brown rapt in his wild silence.

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Life of a Lady, by Richard Aldington. Doubleday Doran, $1.75. The tale of a British lady whose psyche was ruined by the war. Probably conceived as an outline of intense incidents. Result: a skeleton badly needing flesh. Far below Aldington's novel on a related theme.

End of Summer, by S. N. Behrman, $2; Paradise Lost, by Clifford Odets, $2; Bury the Dead, by Irwin Shaw, $1. Full text of three outstanding plays in handy library editions published by Random House.

Idiot's Delight, by Robert Sherwood. Scribner. $2. The Pulitzer prize play, with an author's anti-war, anti-fascist postscript.

The Crime, by Michael Blankfort. New Theater League, 25c. Full text of the strike play recently produced by the Theater of Action. With a prefatory note by John Howard Lawson.

Romeo and Juliet. Random House, $2. The complete Shapsekeare text together with the scenario version prepared for the coming Hollywood film. With many short chapters on the problem of filming Shakespeare by Professor Strunk, Max Herzberg, some of the actors, director and producing staff.

A Treasury of the Theater: An Anthology of Great Plays from Aeschylus to Eugene O'Neill. Simon and Schuster, $3.75. Large type and fairly opaque paper; economical way of buying 34 plays—even if one is surprised to find *Of Thee I Sing* and *The Green Pastures* included as examples of greatness. Edited with many interesting notes by John Gassner and Burns Mantle.

Theory and Technique of Playwriting, by John Howard Lawson. Putnam. $2.75. A brilliant contribution to a Marxist understanding of the theory of drama, and an interesting treatise on playwriting.

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Alfred Miller will speak on "Asylum for the Foreign Born" at the June 25 meeting of the Friends of THE NEW MASSES, at Steinway Hall (Room 717A, 113 West 57 Street, New York, 8:30 p. m.). Everyone interested in the work of The Friends of THE NEW MASSES is invited to attend.

Last week we reported editorially the arrest of Josephine Johnson and Joe Jones when they were in Forrest City, Arkansas to cover the sharecroppers' strike for THE NEW MASSES. After a brief session in jail, during which time they were searched, their baggage rifled, their letters read by the local police, the novelist and the painter were released. Josephine Johnson's report and Joe Jones' drawings have arrived too late for this issue. They will be a feature of THE NEW MASSES for June 30. Readers of *Now in November* will remember Josephine Johnson as the winner of a Pulitzer award. Joe Jones' drawings and paintings have been widely exhibited and published.

Among the contributors to this issue:

Marc Blitzstein is a composer, lecturer, contributor of lyrics to the left revue *Parade*, and a member of the faculty of both the New School and the Downtown Music School.

Harrison George, a member of the staff of The Sunday Worker, has written widely on imperialism, particularly in the Far East and in Latin America. An article on the murder of his son at the hands of the Vargas police appeared in our issue of March 24, 1936.

Rockwell Kent, chiefly known for his drawings, paintings and writings, is a member of the Committee to Aid the Vermont Marble Workers. A previous article by him appeared in THE NEW MASSES of March 31, 1936.

Lan Adomian is the director of the New Singers, a group which recently presented the choral version of Eisler's *Mother*. A number of the recent Eisler recordings, were made under his direction.

Arnold Blanche's paintings have been frequently exhibited in New York City galleries. He is a member of the American Artists Congress.

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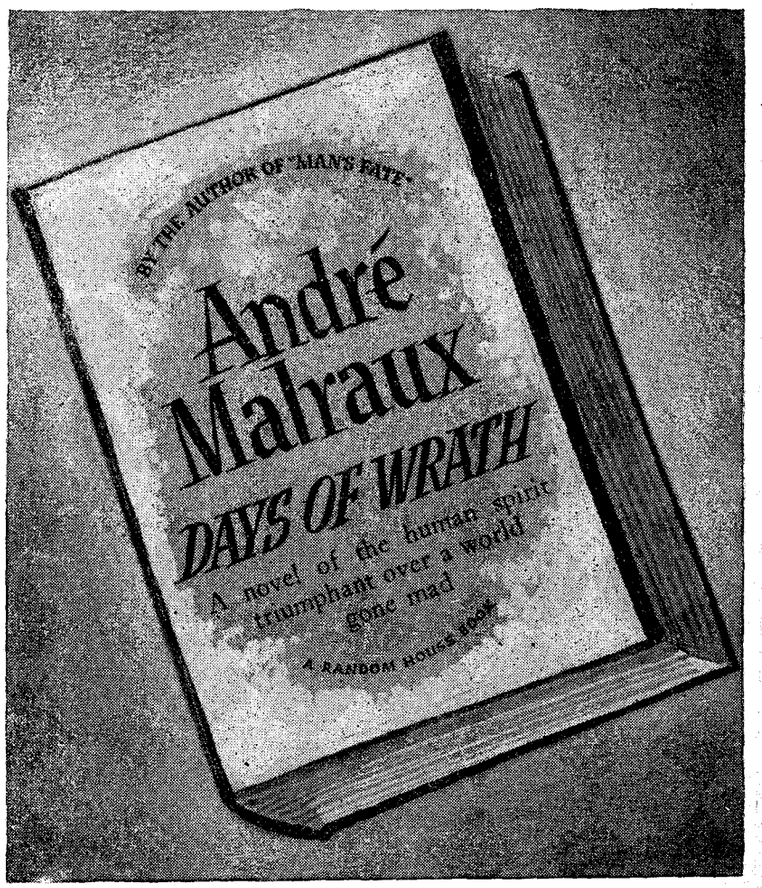
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